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THE INDEPENDENT

THURSDAY 2 MAY 1996 40p (IR 45p)

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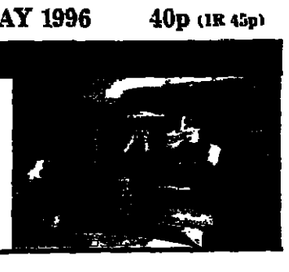

More Tory chaos as poll defeat looms

Beef row enrages Euro-sceptics

DONALD MACINTYRE and COLIN BROWN

Tory anger over the Government's inability to secure an immediate end of the European Union beef ban erupted in the Commons yesterday in an open display of backbench discontent as the party braced itself for hundreds of casualties in today's council elections.

The deep Tory divisions over Europe, which have overshadowed the election campaign, were exposed afresh by repeated demands for a tougher line with the EU and a warning from the Euro-sceptic Nicholas Budgen that the Commons might not give the required approval for a cull of 42,000 cattle.

The deep unease that has been simmering over the EU's role in the beef crisis surfaced as a robust Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, repeated that he was sympathetic to a single currency and was accused by Euro-sceptics of contradicting John Major by telling a Commons select committee that British EMU membership would not have "enormous" constitutional implications.

As Cabinet ministers sought vainly to divert the focus of the campaign on to bread and butter issues like Labour's tax plans, the eve of poll was also enlivened by a call from the whipless Tory MP Peter Thurnham to vote Liberal Democrat and a promise by John Redwood, former Secretary of State for Wales, that he had no intention of challenging Mr Major again for the party leadership.

But it was the row over beef that dominated the Commons less than 24 hours before the last full-scale test for John Major ahead of a general election.

Amid repeated complaints that the EU was imposing the ban for "political" and "commercial" reasons, the former minister Patrick Nicholls (Teignbridge) said Mr Hogg could "ask, plead and cajole" but that he "could compel nothing" and urged the Government to ask itself on what terms it should remain in the EU. An-

other Tory Euro-sceptic, John Townend, chairman of the right wing 92 Group, demanded a time limit on the ban and suggested a threat of retaliatory action unless the ban was lifted within three or four weeks.

Mr Hogg said several times during the tense Commons exchanges that there was a primary obligation on the Government to consider what policies would be most likely to bring about a lifting of the ban.

Tension over the beef issue was fuelled by a leaked letter from Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, to Mr Major protesting about the disarray caused by Michael Heseltine's retreat last week from confrontation with Britain's EU partners.

Mr Rifkind had raised expectations of tough action when he warned the Government was considering "other options" after failing to secure a lifting of the ban at a crisis meeting of European foreign ministers. Mr Heseltine later stepped in, however, to rule out "semi-macho" retaliatory measures after intense Westminster speculation that the Government was considering sanctions or the withholding of EU contributions.

Describing himself to the Treasury Select Committee as "sympathetic" to EMU, Mr Clarke said: "The theory that EMU inevitably leads to some super state is a myth." He went on: "The central judgement you are making is whether member states would benefit from having a common monetary policy. I can conceive of circumstances where that would be of benefit to the UK ...

"I came away from [the EU finance ministers' meeting at] Verona firmly of the opinion British political policy should be conducted on the basis that it is the intention of the others that there will be economic and monetary union. They think they can do it and they are going to do it. It is folly for us to assume it is all not going to work."

In a speech to the Newspaper Society, the Prime Minister said he would not be "pushed from one edge to the other" in a debate on Europe. "I am a Conservative because I believe in Conservatism and I take the middle of the road view on European matters."

Beef cull starts, page 2

Lenin gives way to Marilyn on May Day

Traditional images of Communist leaders are replaced by a poster of a Marilyn Monroe lookalike as marchers celebrate May Day in Moscow. Looking backwards, page 12

Railtrack blamed after trains looted

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

Three freight trains, including one carrying wine, were looted in north London after they were delayed by emergency repairs by Railtrack – an embarrassing revelation on the day that its share price was set at between 350p and 390p for the forthcoming flotation, valuing the company at less than £2bn.

As 1.9 million people registered for the shares, Opposition parties and anti-rail privatisation groups labelled the sale "a rip off" and "an act of vandalism".

The latest Great Train Robbery in February happened as the track work disrupted service over six days. More than 100 bottles of Australian and South African wine were found on the track near Primrose Hill, north London, and another container with "dangerous goods" was also broken into.

Several freight operators have transferred goods from rail to road as a result of the disruption. Railtrack has already been criticised by the Health and Safety Executive for the deterioration in the condition of the track on lines out of Euston which have resulted in a 10mph speed limit being imposed causing severe delays.

The chaotic series of events at Primrose Hill, just north of Euston, is described in a letter leaked to Channel 4's *Dispatches* programme last night from Freightliner, one of BR's two remaining railfreight companies, in which the company's managing director, James Mackay, warns that Railtrack's "very unsatisfactory" performance puts in danger "revenue amounting to several millions of pounds".

The delays also threatened the prestigious Ford contract for taking cars through the Channel tunnel operated by the other BR company, Railfreight Distribution.

Mr Mackay said that Cosco, its sixth largest customer, "withdrew all business from us until we can provide assurance that deliveries can be made to schedule".

A Freightliner official would not give details of the value of the goods stolen or what the dangerous goods comprised "for security reasons". However, he added: "The thieves struck lucky because normally the containers would be carrying boring stuff."

A closure of the North London line for work to enable Eurostar trains heading north of London to use the track led to freight traffic being diverted onto the Primrose Hill line.

However, the state of this short stretch of track was so bad that the track kept failing and there was concern about a derailment.

The track condition worsened because of the extra trains and had to be relaid. A memo on the condition of the track said much of the foundation was "mud" and that components such as clips were "breaking daily".

The maintenance work caused a total of 88 hours delay to Freightliner's trains – one was delayed for 18 hours.

The completion of the work was put back by Railtrack on several days after Freightliner had been promised that it would be finished. As a consequence, some of Freightliner's trains were left on vulnerable parts of the railway system in north London which resulted in the thefts.

Meanwhile, it was revealed that small investors scrambled to register for the Railtrack flotation with 500,000 putting their names down to receive application forms and special discounts over the past week.

Rush for Railtrack, page 18

Arms exporter's AGM ends in violent protest

PATRICK TOOHER

Directors of British Aerospace, Britain's biggest military exporter, were splattered with eggs, paint and tomatoes yesterday when anti-arms trade protesters disrupted a stormy and violent annual meeting of shareholders in central London.

The trouble came soon after BAe chief executive, Dick Evans, denied personal knowledge of or involvement in moves to deport Mohamed al-Masari, the exiled Saudi dissident at the centre of a diplomatic row between Britain and Saudi Arabia.

One protester attempted to make a citizen's arrest of the entire board for the crime of "mass genocide".

The three-hour meeting was then adjourned in uproar while security guards dragged several demonstrators out of the Queen Elizabeth II conference centre in Westminster, London. No arrests were made.

One startled shareholder, who wished not to be named, said: "It was dreadful. People were fighting and jumping up on the platform."

Mr Evans denied any involvement in the Masari affair, saying it was a matter for the British government. He told Labour MP George Galloway during frequently bad-tempered exchanges that he had no knowledge of any plan to kidnap or murder Mr Masari.

BAe has been accused of putting pressure on the Government to deport Mr Masari in order to safeguard lucrative defence contracts. It is one of a number of UK companies which benefit from the £20bn Al-Yamamah arms deal between Saudi Arabia and Britain. Mr Masari has been allowed to stay in Britain for four years after the Government dropped plans to deport him.

Mr Galloway's allegations were part of a wider attack on BAe's policy on military exports. "The company has the ethics of Pontius Pilate," he said. "They wash their hands of the effects of the arms trade."

The MP for Glasgow Hillhead was among about 100 shareholders who packed the meeting by using token shares in the company to ask questions about its policy on arms sales.

The BAe board were also quizzed about the company's alleged involvement in the sale electric-shock batons, which the company denies, and the policy of its Royal Ordnance subsidiary towards the manufacture of anti-personnel land mines, which the Government last week said it wanted to see banned worldwide.

Directors also heard calls for BAe to stop selling Hawk trainer aircraft to Indonesia. The first of 24 jets are due for delivery this month.

"There is a lot a blood on the balance sheet," Mr Galloway alleged, referring to BAe's £234m profits last year.

Comment, page 19

Fayed's 'nightmare' Reform

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

Mohamed Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods, was approached a week ago to fund a new political party for Britain, a senior aide said last night.

Stewart Steven, the former editor of the London *Evening Standard* who now heads Mr Fayed's new media venture, Liberty Publishing, said: "It is true, someone did present a proposal Mr Al Fayed should fund a new political party." However, he said, it was impressed on Mr Al Fayed "that this is not America" and that tycoons do not form political parties here.

Mr Steven was responding to the disclosure in the *Independent* that Mr Fayed was considering forming a party under the working title, The Reform Party. Mr Fayed's spokesman, Michael Cole, yesterday denied he planned to launch a party or had earmarked £23m to field candidates at the next election.

Others in the Fayed circle insist the idea was still being canvassed. A long-time associate who did not wish to be named said the *Independent* report was accurate and it was a matter of regret that his plans appeared to have been shelved, possibly owing to the leak to the media.

In a letter to the *Independent*, Lord Lester, the Liberal Democrat, who is a political influence on Mr Fayed, distanced himself from the notion of a new party. He urged him to support the Liberal Democrats.

Mr Cole said the *Independent* story was based on an internal note, which "listed a number of desirable reforms which could be calculated to have a beneficial effect on the way in which this country conducts its political life." Mr Steven confirmed that the document came from Mr Fayed's office and that it set out "a programme many people would support".

The paper advocates:

- a Freedom of Information Act;
- a Bill of Rights;
- a Scandinavian-style monarchy;
- abolition of the House of Lords and its replacement by an elected second chamber;
- referendums on devolution for Scotland and Wales;
- renationalisation of the privatised utilities.

Most of those policies are also Liberal Democrat policies. "He's been saying all these things for a long time," said Mr Steven. That did not mean, he added, that Mr Fayed was about to form a political party. He refused to name the people who recently had approached Mr Fayed for funding.

The long-time associate of Mr Fayed's said the document was "a manifesto that flows from long-held concerns of Mr Fayed". It did not include reform of the citizenship laws, which Mr Fayed feels strongly about, as he has consistently been denied British citizenship, despite having lived here for many years.

Banks 'make £1m a day from clearing delay'

JAMES CUSICK

Banks and building societies are making £1m each day, simply by sitting on cheques presented by customers for clearing.

According to an investigation by the Consumers Association, the cheques making their way through the clearing system at any one time are used by banks and building societies to invest in the international money markets.

The CA investigation also found that one in four cheques paid into a bank or building society account takes longer to clear than the time advertised.

CA money editor, Graeme Jacobs, commenting on the report's findings, said: "Customers are being seriously short-changed. While you are waiting for your cash, banks are earning interest on it. These delays are unjustifiable."

However, a number of banks, including Lloyds and the TSB, have described the CA's findings as "without balance". A spokeswoman for Lloyds said: "Lloyds clears in four days and from that time the money is available to our customers. It is just that our computer does not register this till the fifth day.

The CA's survey says that up to 9m cheques are presented in Britain every day. This is normally done in two stages: first they are "cleared for value". With normal current accounts this period should account for two working days after the cheque is paid in. But money can only be removed after the cheque has been also "cleared for fate". This allows banks or building societies to ensure the cheque will not bounce before it lets the cash be withdrawn. The CA found that depending on which bank is involved, customers can wait more than a week before they are allowed to remove their cash.

IN BRIEF

Proms hullabaloo
The balloons, Klaxons and party-poppers banned from the Last Night of Proms are likely to be allowed again under the new regime. Page 4

Gun-law reluctance
Despite research linking guns and high crime rates, the Government is reluctant to introduce major changes to gun laws after Dunblane. Page 4

Today's weather
Cloudy and cool, with some showers. Section Two, page 29

news

Around the world of the local elections in 90 minutes

DAVID AARONOVITCH

In a whirlwind 90 minute spell yesterday your intrepid sketch-writer visited the local election campaign headquarters of each of the three major political parties, took the pulse of British politics today and returned to file this report.

My odyssey took me to three locations in central London and involved walking more than a mile. When the two tycoon parties – Forza Britannia and Harrodian Jihad – are up and running, I may have to make way for a younger man.

First stop was Cowley Street, home of the Liberal Democrats. Hot bagels and coffee were served to hacks in a beautiful oak-panelled room, marred by three flat panels, on two of which was carried the rather puzzling legend "Britain's people, Britain's future". Which I suppose was marginally less meaningless than, say, "Britain's people, Guinea-Bissau's future", but not by much.

This being the Lib-Dems and early in the morning the press was represented by the most junior correspondents (their seniors saving themselves), so the room reeked of toothpaste and hair gel.

Paddy presided, looking craggy and happy. His colleague, Diana Maddock (Christchurch), a teacherly kind of a woman in an odd mauve and gold tartan, promised us insights straight from the "grassroots", which consisted of telling us about an item she'd heard on the *Today* programme featuring Southend. The assembled reporters wracked their brains for questions, failed to think of any and trooped off.

At 11.40am I was inside the Millbank Tower, contemplating the modern marvel that is new Labour's press conference set. This had been designed to look like the exterior walls of a Spanish holiday villa – all white stucco and curving edges. The effect was enhanced by a desk topped with imitation granite, an arrangement of red roses and a large sun-dial with a microphone on top.

It felt like a lovely, sunny place to tuck into a paella, drink wine and get away from politics – especially since we were joined by two of Labour's waisty bon viveurs: John Prescott and Frank Dobson. Oh, and the Leader – after appearing this week "by satellite from Basildon" – was made flesh, addressed us from behind the sun-dial, smiled and said "Look" a lot.

The Conservative presser in Smith Square was a much more gloomy affair. In part their set was to blame. In colour and design it resembled the reception area at one of those American fitness spas. But its chief failing was the great height of the desk. From where I was sitting all that was visible were the necks and heads of Messrs Heseltine, Clarke and Mawhinney in a line, as though they were sitting in a row of old-fashioned steam cabinets.

And they were not happy. In a poignant moment the Chancellor's disembodied head referred to his fiscally prudent shadow as "a rather lonely figure in the labour movement". To emphasise the irony of this description Mr Clarke then went on to remind us that our kith and kin in America, gallant Canada and loyal Australia had all banned British beef before the European Union. This, he said, should be borne in mind by those "trying to turn beef into the latest hysterical Euro-sceptic issue".

The reddening Head of Hezza nodded, for it was a good point. So good that I had never heard any Conservative make it before. Too good certainly for the backbenchers who queued up later in the day in the Chamber to lambaste the dastardly Europeans. The Tories' slogan was "Life's better with the Conservatives". Perhaps. But life doesn't seem to be much fun in the Conservatives.

Battleground, page 7

Legal firms 'go offshore' to avoid litigation

ROGER TRAPP

Many of Britain's biggest law firms are poised to follow the nation's accountants and set themselves up offshore or give up being partnerships in an effort to protect themselves against rising litigation claims.

Dibb Lupton Broomhead, the Leeds-based firm that has expanded aggressively recently to make a mark in the City, has appointed KPMG, the accountancy firm that has incorporated its audit arm, to carry out a feasibility study on the issue, while Linklaters & Paines, one of the most respected firms, has asked a working party of senior partners to report on the matter in the next few weeks. Other firms, including leading City establishment Freshfields and national firm Eversheds, are understood to be investigating it.

The news comes as Clifford Chance, the City's largest firm of solicitors with more than 200 partners, is facing a C$1.3bn (£610m) claim from four Canadian banks that suffered heavy losses in the collapse of Canary Wharf in London's Docklands. Clifford Chance is, like other firms, keeping the issue under review in the wake of the Law Society's recent relaxation of its rules on incorporation, but is not yet planning anything specific.

The claim is thought to be the biggest suit against a London law firm made public, but one partner said there were many others that were settled without being reported. "Nobody likes to see another firm being sued because you think, there but for the grace of God go I," he said.

However, these claims have not yet reached the level of those in the accountancy profession, where suits following the collapses of such organisations as Bank of Credit and Commerce International, the Maxwell empire and British and Commonwealth have caused serious concern in the profession. Late last year, the partners of Binder Hamlyn, which is now part of the United States-based Arthur Andersen organisation, faced bankruptcy after a case involving the purchase of a company by ADT went against the firm.

While KPMG has opted for partial incorporation to deal with this problem, fellow "big six" accountancy firms Price Waterhouse and Ernst & Young have banded together to help the States of Jersey develop a law under which partnerships can limit their liability in much the same way as limited companies. Under the arrangements being proposed, the firm would remain liable for all its debts, but individual partners would not face losing personal assets, such as houses, because of the negligence of other partners.

Both Dibb Lupton and Linklaters will be looking at the Jersey option, but Terence Kyle, managing of partner at Linklaters, pointed out that it was difficult to come to a conclusion about the full implications of that route since the situation was "still a moving target". Nigel Knowles, Dibb Lupton's managing partner, suggested that the firm's main motivation in changing its status was financial. It wanted the ability to meet long-term investment requirements out of retained profits and also to be able to "properly remunerate all the staff" and give them a share of the profits.

A girl lays flowers in memory of 13-year-old Louise Allen, who died after a fight in Corby, Northamptonshire on Monday night. Two girls, aged 12 and 13, accused of manslaughter, were remanded into local authority custody. yesterday They will next appear on 7 May News analysis, page 15

Abattoirs poised for cattle cull to begin

PAUL FIELD

The destruction of at least 21,000 cattle a week is due to begin this morning after 11th hour efforts to authorise more than 60 abattoirs and 80 markets to take part in the £550m scheme.

The plans to remove cattle over 30 months at the end of their productive lives from the food chain, as part of efforts to eradicate BSE, have proved to be a logistical nightmare for the Government.

The scheme was expected to start on Monday but paperwork to approve slaughter houses and markets as collection centres for the cattle put it back by three days.

However, the Agriculture Minister, Douglas Hogg, yesterday told the Commons the slaughter was ready to begin. "Farmers will be anxious to have the finalised details," he said. "We will be sending direct to farmers a note setting all they need to know about the new arrangements."

Earlier, he tried to calm angry Tory MPs over the EU refusal to lift the worldwide ban on British beef after 30 senior Conservative MPs made an unprecedented appeal to every EU ambassador in the UK urging them to ask their governments to end the ban. Among them were former foreign secretaries Douglas Hurd and Lord Howe.

In a statement on his efforts at the Agriculture Council meeting in Luxembourg, Mr Hogg said the Government was pressing ahead with its legal challenge to the ban in the European Court of Justice.

The Shadow Agriculture Minister, Gavin Strang, told him: "We share your commitment to securing an early lifting of the ban on exports. It is very disappointing indeed that you have so little progress to report."

Mr Hogg came under heavy fire over the delay in the start of the scheme to dispose of cattle over 30 months. In addition to the 15,000 dairy cows slaughtered each week, which are at the end of their productive lives, there are an estimated 300,000 prime beef cattle above the 30-month limit which can no longer enter the food chain. To clear this backlog alone, the animals are to be destroyed at a rate of 6,000 a week.

Dr Strang warned that uncertainty surrounded the scheme. "Your failure to put this programme in place, as you agreed to do, undermined your position at the council meeting," he told Mr Hogg.

"It is absolutely vital, both in relation to the financial position of the farmers and the welfare of the animals, that this programme is brought fully into operation as soon as you possibly can."

After the animals have been slaughtered, carcasses will go directly to the renderers who will boil and crush the meat down to a pulp for incineration or landfill burial. However the Intervention Board has admitted renderers cannot operate at the same capacity as the abattoirs and a bottleneck is likely.

Slaughter scheme is 'open to abuse'

Allegations that agents acting for abattoirs are buying calves at auction have sparked fears that the £80m Calf Slaughter Scheme is being abused as a money-making opportunity, writes Paul Field.

The Intervention Board, which is overseeing the scheme, has admitted documentation could be falsified to allow slaughter houses to increase profits from the cull, condemned by vets and animal welfare campaigners.

Under the Government plan, up to 500,000 new-born male calves, which normally would have been exported each year as part of the veal trade, are being destroyed. There has been no market for them since 27 March, when the worldwide ban on British beef took effect.

The Livestock Auctioneers Association, representing the cattle markets, confirmed that abattoirs or their agents had been buying calves at auction. At Cardigan cattle market in Wales, 50 calves were sold to agents on Monday, according to auctioneers JJ Morris.

Under the scheme, calves are supposed to go directly from the farm to the abattoir, which is paid £103 per calf, out of which the veterinary service and the farmer have to be paid. These fees are agreed in advance.

To be eligible for the scheme the male calf must be less than 10 days old and fit to travel – vets are being used to approve calves for slaughter. But the 79 authorised abattoirs must give the Intervention Board three days' notice of how many animals are to be slaughtered, and calves cannot go to auction until they are seven days old.

However, an Intervention Board source admitted that although on paper fraud was not possible, it could not be ruled out. "There have been cases of calves going to auction and being taken to abattoirs for slaughter," she said. "It is difficult to see how it can be done but there are opportunities for fraud if someone is falsifying the date of birth either at the point of the auction or the farm."

The Federation of Fresh Meat Wholesalers rejected allegations that slaughterhouses were exploiting the scheme. "We are not enthusiastic about the scheme. It is to keep farmers going who sent their calves abroad for veal."

Although the National Farmers' Union dismissed the suggestion that producers could falsify documents, the British Veterinary Association condemned the scheme and urged the Ministry of Agriculture to oversee the paperwork. "Verifying records on farms should not be the role of local veterinary inspectors."

Government steers away from major RUC changes

DAVID MCKITTRICK
Ireland correspondent

The Government has steered away from any radical initiatives in a White Paper, published yesterday, on future policing structures for Northern Ireland.

The paper is designed to lead to legislation to clarify the occasionally troublesome relationship between the three principal bodies involved in policing – the Government, the Northern Ireland Police Authority, and the RUC itself.

It concentrates on reform of this overall administrative structure, and makes no mention of issues such as possible changes to the RUC and the question of whether the force should be reduced in size.

This summer a much more important fundamental review of the RUC is to be formulated by the force itself, together with the Government and the NIPA. This will address the size of the force and its future organisation.

Following the IRA and loyalist ceasefires of late 1994 it was widely assumed that the RUC might be reduced in size by several thousand officers.

The collapse of the IRA ceasefire has however introduced much uncertainty as to whether any reduction will take place. Other reports which are also in the pipeline concern police complaints procedures and emergency legislation.

The White Paper proposes important technical changes in the three-way relationship involving the decision-making bodies. One intention is to transfer control of the RUC's budget from the NIPA to the Chief Constable.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Patrick Mayhew, said the intended legislation would be informed by discussions on policing held during the political talks which are due to open in Belfast on 10 June.

The White Paper proposals seem unlikely to improve the credibility of the NIPA among nationalists.

The Social Democratic and Labour Party and the trade union movement have for years declined to nominate members to it, and its own authority suffered another blow last month when Sir Patrick sacked its chairman, David Cook, and another member following long-running wrangles among its membership.

The Northern Ireland security minister, Sir John Wheeler, also caused a small stir yesterday when he said that issues such as the RUC's name, uniform and badge were irrelevances. Such questions have figured largely in public debates on policing.

Scargill's party to fight Blair

Arthur Scargill announced yesterday that his breakaway Socialist Labour Party would be fielding a candidate in Tony Blair's Sedgefield constituency at the next general election.

Speaking at the formal launch of his party, the National Union of Mineworkers' president said this would be one of at least seven candidates the party would be putting up.

The SLP contested the Hemsworth by-election in February. The party's candidate, Brenda Nixon, just managed to salvage her deposit.

Outlining SLP policies at the Great Northern Hotel in London, Mr Scargill said the party was committed to full employment, would abolish the monarchy and the House of Lords, withdraw from the European Union, abolish anti-trade union legislation, and restore the NHS and social services.

IN BRIEF

Girl's parents lose Marchioness case

The parents of the Marchioness pleasure boat disaster victim Francesca Dallaglio yesterday failed to win an increase in the £34,000 damages awarded last year for the loss of their 19-year-old ballerina daughter.

The Court of Appeal upheld Mr Justice Latham's High Court ruling that there was no secure evidence that Francesca would have provided a regular income for Vincenzo Dallaglio, 61, and his wife Eileen, 58, of Barnes, south-west London.

The couple, whose son Lawrence is an England rugby player, won the damages against the owners of the Marchioness and of the dredger Bowbelle, which ploughed into it on the Thames near Southwark Bridge on 20 August, 1989, with the loss of 51 lives.

Car ring arrests

Detectives investigating a £1.5m stolen car ring arrested two men in Lisnaskea, Co Fermanagh, after raiding five addresses in the area. They recovered around 100 four-wheel drive vehicles worth more than £1.5m. The men were brought back to Charles Street police station in Leicester. Four men were arrested last month in raids in Leicester and Bedford as part of the inquiry and charged with conspiracy to handle stolen vehicles.

Animal protest

Over 1,000 animal lovers lobbied Parliament to change the status of animals in Europe. The mass lobby organised by Compassion in World Farming was to support the campaign to get all EU countries to recognise animals as sentient beings. The campaigners, some of whom had taken part in the port protests at Shoreham and Brightlingsea against the export of live animals from Britain, are still demanding a total ban on the export of live cattle.

Anniversary murder

A man was shot dead in Liverpool almost a year to the hour after the murder of David Ungi initiated a bloody gang war in the city. The victim was gunned down in a Toxteth betting shop and died at the scene. Mr Ungi was cut down in a hail of automatic weapon fire after being ambushed in his car in Toxteth last year. His death was the catalyst for a string of "tit for tat" shooting incidents in the city over the last 12 months.

Television triumph

Lynne Faulds Woods's series *The Lady Killers* won four prestigious awards as the television presenter celebrated beating cancer herself. Faulds Wood, 45, was named medical broadcaster of the year by the British Medical Association, and the series also gained three other awards. Faulds Wood put the project on hold when she found she had colonic cancer. On the fifth anniversary of her operation this year doctors told her she had beaten the disease.

£2m school blaze

Hundreds of children escaped unhurt when a £2m fire wrecked their school. Staff took only three minutes to lead the 664 youngsters to safety after two pupils spotted smoke in an area used to store go-karts. Soon after they were cleared from the two-storey building in Runcorn, Cheshire, an explosion ripped through it. By the time firefighters arrived, a third of Brookvale Comprehensive was ablaze and beyond saving.

Hip, hooray

A 106-year-old woman is the oldest person in the world to receive a replacement hip. Mrs Kay Sharp is recovering from the two-hour operation at The Lodge old people's home in Scarborough, Yorkshire, and can get out of bed. Chris Long, general manager for surgery at Scarborough General Hospital, said: "There are risks involved in any operation but for someone of 106 they will be higher."

Holy trinity

A faded tapestry hanging in a church for 250 years is worth £250,000, researchers say. The 3m square tapestry at St Andrew's, Presteigne, Powys, of Christ on a donkey entering Jerusalem, is 500 years old and one of only three in the world.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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Sounds of music: Good news rings out for Royal Albert Hall concert-goers and fee-paying choir schools

Director to revive pomp at the Proms

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Arts Correspondent

The balloons, klaxons and party poppers banned from the Last Night of Proms are likely to be allowed again under the new director's relaxed regime, it emerged yesterday.

Sir John Drummond, the former director, horrified fun-loving concert-goers when he issued a clampdown last year on "extraneous" noises during the last night of the season at the Royal Albert Hall. But after 10 years at the helm he has been replaced by Nicholas Kenyon, controller of BBC Radio 3, who takes a freer view of the subject.

He admitted: "I don't think people who have been to a high proportion of 72 concerts can be stopped from letting their hair down. I am a 'let joy be unconfined' man myself."

His broadminded attitude is also reflected in the programme for this year's season, the 102nd, which runs from 19 July to 14 September.

For the first time stars, including Joanna Lumley, Paul McCartney and Prunella Scales, have been asked to endorse their favourite composers and the proms programme contains a CD explaining their choices.

Nicholas Kenyon: Broadminded

Mr Kenyon, who has been working on the schedule for 18 months, has also pushed the boundaries to include jazz and Broadway numbers into what is normally a strict diet of classical fare.

In another attempt to lure in those who would not normally think of attending classical music concerts, Mr Kenyon has initiated a "Junior Prom" with £3-a-seat concerts for schoolchildren aged six to 14. The pieces played will be no longer than seven minutes long. However, Mr Kenyon insisted he had made no radical change to the traditions created by Sir John Drummond. "It's a new era for the Proms, but it's not in any sense a revolution," he said.

"We hope that the CD will draw in audiences who might not otherwise have thought the Proms were for them."

This year's Proms programme promises 79 new works, including 14 premières. Highlights will be concerts by the Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra and New York Philharmonic.

The Last Night, with its traditional singing of "Land of Hope and Glory", will be spiced up by the London première of a new work by Poul Ruders: *Concerto in Pieces*, a reworking of Purcell.

Sir Georg Solti will conduct the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for Beethoven's Choral Symphony, and the soprano Dawn Upshaw will give a late-night recital. Most prices have been pegged near last year's levels of £18 for a balcony seat, and £2 or £3 to stand. The season ticket (standing at every concert) will be £130.

High note: choristers Alex Taylor-Maughan, Harriet Anson and Jonathan Roberts at Wells Cathedral school — Photograph: Ian Newton

Labour sings praises of choral education

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

A Labour government would continue to subsidise places in Britain's fee-paying choir schools despite its pledge to phase out the assisted places scheme.

John Baxter, chairman of the Choir Schools' Association, last night told its annual conference that Labour had promised to look at ways of supporting choristers.

Mr Baxter said that a series of meetings with Labour had been encouraging. David Blunkett, the party's spokesman on education, had said: "We regard choral talent as a special need and we are looking for the means to meet this using specialist facilities which are not readily available in the state sector."

At present, the Government spends £110,000 a year to help around 50 day and boarding pupils who would not otherwise be able to afford the fees in 33 out of the 39 choir schools.

The scheme is very similar to the assisted places scheme which helps bright pupils with fees at other private schools.

Labour has said that it will abolish the scheme but is examining plans to fund children with special needs in fee-paying schools where no suitable facilities are available in state schools.

However, Labour sources emphasised yesterday that, while it is prepared to support choristers, it is not committed to funding private school places for other talented children. The party is looking at ways in which local authorities might fund more places in fee-paying schools. A few choristers already receive local authority funding.

Mr Baxter said: "It has long been our desire to guarantee a chorister a place at a choir school regardless of parental means and background.

"Our own research shows that we have some way to go to ensure that cathedral choir stalls are filled by boys and girls from the whole social spectrum."

He added: "We would welcome Labour support in achieving this ambition, but we should examine our own activities too."

An association survey last summer showed that around 90 per cent of choristers come from the top two socio-economic groups. Choir schools, which are attached to cathedrals, churches and college chapels, educate 800 choristers as well as more than 14,000 other boys and girls.

All receive some help towards fees and some pay nothing. On average parents pay less than half fees.

A growing number of members offer places to girls. The conference will discuss how choir schools can recruit more pupils from state primary schools and from ethnic minority groups.

Tory blasts Major's plan for schools

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

A leading Conservative education adviser has attacked the Prime Minister's plans for a grammar school in every town as "ill-conceived," saying they will condemn the majority of children to being taught in secondary moderns.

Demitri Coryton, chairman of the Conservative Education Association, told a conference that comprehensive schools had proved they could deliver high standards. He also attacked the Government's slogan on education, "Choice and Diversity," saying the two were not necessarily compatible.

The speech to a Church of England head teachers' conference is bound to anger right-wing Conservatives whose case for more selection and opting out has been fought successfully.

Mr Coryton attacked the notion that opting out, selection and a range of independently-run specialist schools would broaden parents' range of choices. Giving choice to one group of parents could be at the expense of others, he said.

Bringing back grammar schools would not give parents greater choice of schools but would give schools the right to choose pupils, he said.

John Major had been badly advised and was out of step with the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, Gillian Shephard. "Those who argue that the Government needs to put clear blue water between it and Labour by following so called "radical" policies may well find that it is deep blue water in which they sink," he said.

"The Prime Minister should forget his ill-conceived plan to bring back a selective system. There is little parental support for it and no research evidence to justify the upheaval that such a policy would entail," he told the conference.

Mrs Shephard was potentially the most successful Education secretary in half a century, he added, and Mr Major should "let her get on with the job".

Long faces at NY art houses

EDWARD HELMORE

The spring sales of impressionist and modern art in New York had a mixed opening with an evening auction at Christie's in which two of the most expensive pieces, a portrait by Picasso and a still life by Gauguin, failed to sell.

Fifty-eight of the 67 works on offer were sold. 32 above pre-sale estimates, raising $76.2m (£49.5m), below estimates of $77.2m to $104.3m and well beneath last autumn's evening sale total of $107m.

Despite the shortfall, the art world's high hopes for this week's sale of impressionists were partially met with strong sales of less expensive works and, as a whole, prices signaled the market is holding steady. Between Christie's, which is judged to have the more important works this year, and Sotheby's, which began its sale last night, there are over 700 works of art on offer.

The highlight of the Christie's evening was *Interieur d'un Restaurant*, an 1887-1888 painting by Vincent van Gogh that had not changed hands since 1935, which fetched $10.3m, marginally above estimates.

Different strokes: 'Pope I' (left) by Francis Bacon will be shown with its inspiration 'Portrait of Pope Innocent X' (right) by Velazquez at the National Gallery on 2-19 May

Degas's *Woman in the Tub*, described by Christie's as the most important painting by the artist to have come up for auction since *Les Blachiseuses* sold for $13.5m in 1987, went for $5.4m, well below an expected hammer price of $7m. Monet's *Le Palais Contranini* took $3.85m against an estimate of $4m to $6m.

Though bidding on lots priced up to $1m were brisk, faces in the packed auction grew longer as a number of the most important works on offer failed to sell at all. Bidding on Paul Gauguin's *Nature morte à l'Esperance*, a comparatively dull painting of sunflowers that once hung in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art reached only $5 million before it was withdrawn for failing to reach its $10m reserve.

Pablo Picasso's 1932 portrait of Marie-Therese Walter, *La Lecture*, was expected to fetch between $6m and $8m, but failed to meet the required minimum; bidding stopped at $4.8m. Last auctioned in 1989 for $5.8m, it was judged by many to be over-valued.

Some lots reached above the market's expectation, including *Charing Cross Bridge à la hauteur du Parliament* by Claude Monet which fetched $3.9m, beating its high estimate of $3.5m, and a Matisse, *Les citrons au plat d'étain*, which, at $3.7m, fetched more than a million above its high estimate.

Many of the pictures at auction were from the estates of two notable private collectors, the late Joseph Hazen, a Hollywood lawyer who first brought Elvis Presley to the screen and Joanne Toor Cummings, a New York collector who was married to the founder of one of America's largest food concerns.

The sales have intensified the rivalry between Sotheby's and Christie's. Sotheby's has long been the larger and but last year Christie's moved closer with $1.47bn to Sotheby's $1.67bn.

The impressionist sales continue this week and next week both houses return with contemporary sales.

RSPB in plea to save elusive bird

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds yesterday appealed for £300,000 to fund Scottish island projects aimed at saving endangered birds.

The organisation wants to spend the money on the islands of Egilsay, in the Orkneys, and Oronsay, in the Inner Hebrides, two of the last United Kingdom strongholds of the fast-disappearing corncrake.

Once common on farmland, the corncrakes have vanished from most of the UK since early this century because of changing habitat and breeding failure.

The species has ceased to breed in Northern Ireland, leaving the northern and western isles of Scotland as the final footholds.

Traditional farming methods continue on the two Scottish islands and the society believes that with careful management, small populations of these summer-visiting birds could be increased.

Because the birds are secretive, the only means of measuring population size is by counting the number of males giving out the distinctive rasping call of the species during the breeding season.

Seven males were heard calling on Egilsay last year and the RSPB plans to buy Onziebust Farm, covering a quarter of the island, in the hope it can more than double the number.

Oronsay had three calling males last year and the society, which aims to lease the island, believes that by improving the habitat the number could be increased.

There were just 570 calling male corncrakes found in the UK last year and in the 25 years to 1993, the national population declined by more than 50 per cent.

Frosties in hot water over ad's sex appeal

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

Children's campaigners yesterday expressed horror at the new Frosties interactive advertisement, which offers kids the option to "make out".

The Kellogg commercial for the breakfast cereal is claimed as being the first of its kind in the world. It is to be piloted on the Videotron cable in London.

Aimed at children, the advertisement allows them a range of on-screen options to decide how action will unfold.

The option that has raised the hackles of children's workers comes when children are presented with three choices – "eat", "sleep" or "make out".

If they press "eat", they are shown a Frosties eating shot. If they press "sleep" they are shown someone sleeping. But if they press "make out", footage of two zebras nuzzling appears on the screen.

During an initial trial of the advertisement, which hits 100,000 homes in the London area for eight weeks from Monday, kids aged between six and 12 are said to have shown enormous enjoyment.

But a spokeswoman for Kidscape, the children's charity, said the reaction at her office was one of "shock and horror".

"It is not appropriate to use sex to sell cornflakes, and they are foisting this on children," she said.

But Nigel Sheldon, head of interactive media at J Walter Thompson, the advertising agency which pioneered the commercial with Kellogg and Videotron, said the option was not salacious. "The zebras aren't mating, they are just two zebras putting their faces towards each other," he said.

news

Researchers serve up new recipe for origin of Life on Earth

TOM WILKIE
Science Editor

Life on Earth may have begun in a primordial pancake rather than the traditional primordial soup, scientists suggest today.

More than a century ago, Charles Darwin considered that life might have started when simple molecules linked together into more complex ones in some "warm little pool". Researchers since then have been mixing different ingredients in the laboratory in the hope of reinventing that primordial soup.

Now British-born Leslie Orgel, of the Salk Institute for Biological Sciences in San Diego, California, and his colleagues, claim researchers may have been looking in the wrong place. The problem with the primordial soup is that reactions with water tend to split molecules off faster than they can adhere to the growing chain of complexity.

Instead, Dr Orgel suggests, Earth made the transition from being lifeless to having the first self-replicating entities on the surface of rocks, minerals or clays, rather than in Darwin's pool. Life began quite literally clinging to the surface of our planet and has its roots in clay.

The researchers report in today's issue of the scientific journal *Nature* that they have been able to persuade strings of nucleic acids – the molecules of genetic inheritance – to grow better on the surface of clay than in watery solution. The basic building blocks of proteins, the second important class of biological molecules, also assemble themselves better on mineral surfaces.

According to Günter von Kriedowski, of the Ruhr-Universität in Bochum, Germany, writing in the same issue, the experiments show that the complex molecules of life, known as polymers, "were more likely to have been baked like pre-biotic crêpes than cooked in a primordial soup". Just as "French crêpes are prepared by pouring liquid dough over a hot stone plate, causing it to dehydrate and solidify" so the polymers of life may have condensed together on the surface of stones and clays – although the process would not have been carried out at baking hot temperatures.

But Dr von Kriedowski believes that some sort of soup would still have been necessary, if only to provide the ingredients splashed on to the rocks and clays – a little like the tomato sauce spread on the surface of a pizza, perhaps. The primordial soup (or sauce) model "is thus compatible with a surface-mediated origin of life. The common message is that the earliest forms of life may have proliferated by spreading on surfaces".

The details of how life got from long chains of nucleic acid to self-replicating molecules and then to the even greater complexity of single-celled organisms have not yet been worked out. But Dr Orgel is also one of the leading advocates of the idea that before the present diversity of life evolved, based as it is on DNA, there was a shadowy "RNA-world". Life in this world used a molecule that is chemically related to DNA to carry genetic information down the generations. But RNA is different in two ways. Its most important property is that, in some forms known as ribozymes, it can splice itself thus promoting its own replication – a vital step in the development of life.

RNA is also less stable than DNA, so it is unlikely to have produced even an organism as simple as a bacterium. Therefore, had life not switched, some 3 billion years ago to putting its eggs in the DNA basket, the RNA world would never have had the richness and diversity of life on Earth today.

Government to resist calls for firearms ban

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Despite research showing strong links between guns and high crime rates, the Government appears reluctant to introduce major changes to gun laws in the wake of the Dunblane child killings.

In its evidence to the inquiry into the massacre, the Government indicates it is impossible to legislate for a mad gunman going on the rampage as Thomas Hamilton did in Dunblane last month and as Martin Bryant did last week in Tasmania.

The Government rules out calls for a total arms ban and says that recommendations that would-be gun owners undergo psychological testing and obtain doctors' certificates have run into opposition from the medical profession. GPs do not want to be placed in a position of making a "judgement" on a patient they hardly know and written tests are regarded as a meaningless assessment.

But two international studies confirm that countries with lax gun laws have far higher gun related killings – for example fatal shootings in the US are 50 times higher than in the United Kingdom. However, the Government says it already has some of the tightest gun laws in the world, and warns of the impact on employment and income from both shooting sports and leisure pursued by the 175,000 people with firearm certificates.

"Criminals do not generally licence their guns. An absolute ban would make it impossible for guns to be held legally, and the number held illegally might well be expected to increase. Some of these might then find their way to professional criminals," it says.

Ministers, however, appear ready to endorse suggestions to restrict licensing to only .22 calibre pistols, raise the minimum age for gun possession from 14 to 18 or 21 and greater controls on the storage of weapons and ammunition – perhaps dictating that they be held in separate locations.

They are among the 35 suggestions put forward for consideration by Lord Cullen, the senior Scottish judge who is to head the inquiry.

But the Government came under attack by the former Home Office minister, David Mellor, who said gun laws were a matter for parliament, not a judge. He told the BBC: "I personally think it was a serious error for the Home Office to queue up in front of Lord Cullen to put to him policy proposals that really are a matter for government to determine.

But the Home Office Minister, David Maclean, said the Government was anxious to guard against "knee-jerk" legislation. "We've also said quite clearly that if Lord Cullen had any interim recommendations to make on firearms control, we would want to get them speedily and the Government would consider them carefully."

The last gun law review, following the Hungerford massacre by Michael Ryan in 1988 – led to the banning of semi-automatic rifles.

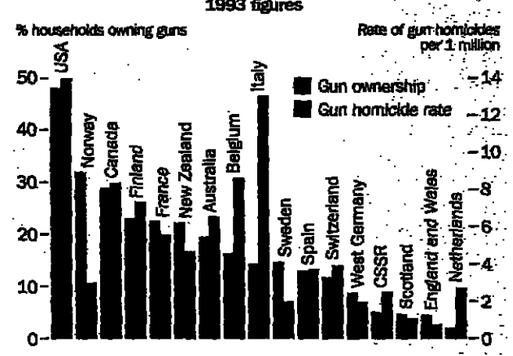
Yesterday Lord Cullen confirmed that gun law would be one of the main planks of his investigation, alongside school security and the supervision of adults working with children.

In an opening statement, he expressed "deepest sympathy" to all those affected by the events at Dunblane Primary School.

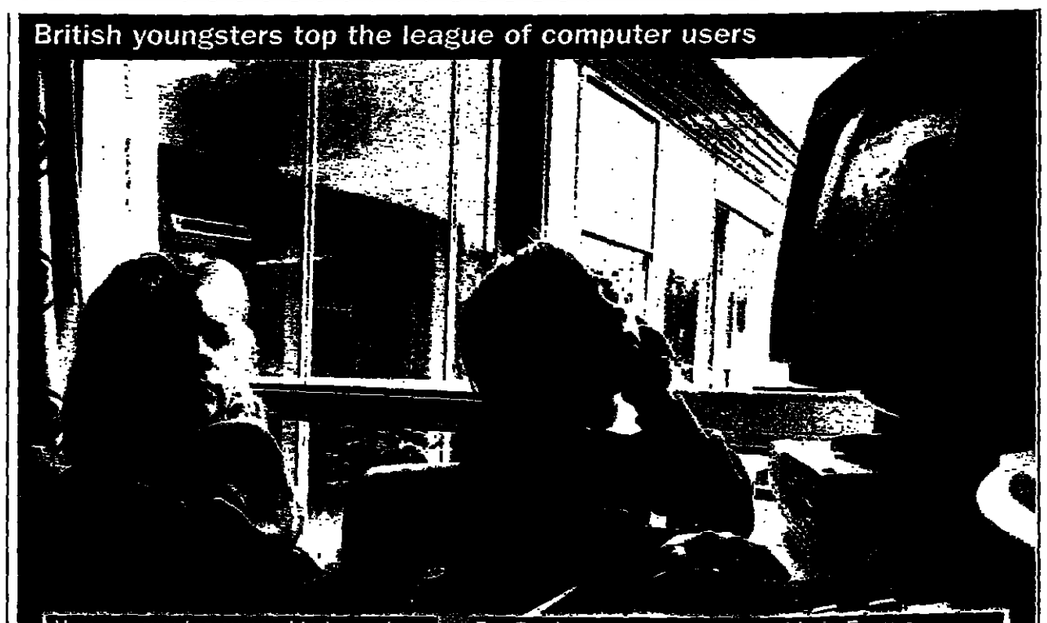
None of the parents of the 16 children who died were at yesterday's preliminary hearing. But when the public inquiry starts on 29 May, they and the other injured children will be represented by Colin Campbell QC.

Head teacher Ronald Taylor will also be represented at the inquiry, as will the local authorities, the police – who issued Hamilton his firearm certificate – and the teaching unions.

International ownership and rates of homicide
1993 figures



British youngsters top the league of computer users



Home computer ownership by region

Region	% households
South East	34%
London	[illegible]
Midlands	[illegible]
Scotland	30%
Yorkshire	28%
Humberside	28%
North	27%
North West	27%
South West	26%
Wales	25.5%

Top Ten home computer ownership in Europe

Position	Country	% of households	Number of home computers
1	UK	32%	7,500,000
2	Holland	31%	1,950,000
3	Italy	29%	8,650,000
4	France	21%	451,000
	Finland	21%	4,700,000
5	Germany	20%	7,300,000
	Sweden	20%	760,000
6	[illegible]	[illegible]	198,000
7	[illegible]	17%	297,500
	Turkey	17%	1,900,000
8	Denmark	16%	375,000
	Portugal	16%	500,000
	Spain	[illegible]	1,400,000
10	Belgium	[illegible]	300,000

Britain leads way in PC world

ROS WYNNE-JONES

Britain has the highest proportion of households with personal computers in the world, it was revealed yesterday, as Labour and the Government fought to champion the cause of computers in schools.

Nearly one in three British households now owns a personal computer with average usage running at 10 hours a week, according to a new report compiled from government figures. Almost 45 per cent of homes with schoolchildren own a personal computer, compared with 30 per cent in 1990.

Twenty one per cent of households own a computer in France, 20 per cent in Germany and 18 per cent in Ireland, while only 15 per cent of households own a computer in the US, the report for Olivetti Personal Computers reveals. Japan is "nowhere near the top ten of home computer owners" despite its high-tech image. "There is so little space in Japanese homes that workers would tend to stay late at the office rather than have a computer at home," said Don Philpott, who compiled the Olivetti market report.

The figures emerged as Tony Blair and Robin Squire, Under-Secretary of State for Education, competed to stamp their own signature on the high-tech future of Britain's schools. Speaking at the Curriculum 2000 conference at London's British Film Institute, both laid claim to the brightest vision of how to harness the possibilities of information technology.

Mr Blair pledged partnerships with business to revolutionise children's learning through computer technology. He announced an independent expert panel, chaired by millionaire businessman Dennis Stevenson, chairman of the trustees of the Tate Gallery, to prepare plans for action by a Labour government on information technology in schools.

The Labour leader derided the Government for being behind the times, saying that half of computers in primary schools and one third in secondary schools were more than six years old.

Mr Squire replied that the Government already had partnership with the private sector in place and was already testing IT projects in schools. He attacked Labour for "one-off gimmicks" and deals based on "political expediency".

Labour has offered British Telecom new commercial opportunities in return for connecting every school to the information superhighway.

Mr Philpott said that although about 7.5 million computers were owned by British households, politicians still had an important role to play in bringing computers to schools. "It is particularly important for areas where fewer families own computers, because there is a large disparity from area to area," he said.

Computers were of vital importance to education, he said. "Many parents believe computers are capable of providing educational information which children are not prepared to see elsewhere. Almost one in three children never or hardly ever read a book out of school, yet they will happily absorb the same information from their computers."

A spokesman for Computers in Education, an independent advisory unit, said: "More families having computers is a good thing for children because it gives them greater access. Of course, it does depend on what they are using them for, but even computer games will build up keyboard skills. We would still argue that more computers are necessary in schools because, due to economics, some families will continue not to have access at home."

Television watching has been "significantly eroded" by computer usage, particularly among young people, the report reveals. Fewer young people watch television at night and some spend up to 20 hours a week at their computer keyboards, mainly for educational purposes or playing games.

Leading article, page 16

Cantona case fan waits for verdict

Magistrates took the unusual step yesterday of adjourning overnight to consider their verdict in the case of the Crystal Palace fan accused of provoking Eric Cantona's outburst at a Premier League match last year.

The three-member panel adjourned at 1pm after the prosecution and defence had both completed their cases during the two-day hearing.

But at 4.10pm the court reconvened and Mary Richards, chairman of magistrates at Croydon, said: "We are considering the evidence very carefully and there are a number of witnesses and witness statements to consider.

"We are unlikely therefore to reach a decision today and so we are adjourning to 11am tomorrow."

Matthew Simmons, 21, of Thornton Heath, south London, denies using threatening words and behaviour during the game between Manchester United and Crystal Palace at Selhurst Park, London, on 25 January 1995. It is alleged that his behaviour provoked Cantona's leap into the terraces where he launched a kung-fu kick.

Mr Simmons was struck in the chest by Cantona's boots and then punched twice by the United player who had been sent off. Magistrates heard that the case against Mr Simmons had been weakened by the failure of the Crown to call Cantona as a witness.

Adam Davis, Mr Simmons' lawyer, told the court that of the 70 witness statements police had taken following the incident, the prosecution had been able to find only three people to give evidence that they heard Mr Simmons swear at Cantona.

He said: "All the prosecution witnesses are tainted by the newspaper coverage of the case.

"Simmons' character, the incident itself and particularly the making of these witnesses' statements, all coincide with articles appearing in the newspapers."

Spelling 'to come before TV soaps'

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Schools must take care not to put too much emphasis on *EastEnders* and computers at the expense of basic literacy, Nick Tate, the Government's chief adviser on the curriculum will tell a conference today.

Dr Tate says that when 33 per cent of young people cannot spell the word sincerely and more than 40 per cent spell apologise wrongly, there are more urgent priorities for schools than studying the BBC 1 soap *EastEnders*, advertising and teenage magazines.

The chief adviser, who will explain his views at a British Film Institute conference on education and new media technologies, says he is worried that the number of sixth-formers studying media studies will expand while the number studying English Literature declines.

Dr Tate will suggest that, though it is important to know how the mass media function, it is more important for society for young people to study Milton than more television programmes and magazines.

The numbers doing GCSE and A-level media studies are small but growing fast and degree courses in media studies are booming. There is a danger, Dr Tate believes, that media education and Information Technology will be "overdone" because it is easier to engage young people's attention through them than through traditional academic subjects.

Dr Tate, chief executive of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, will make clear that young people need to study the media and new technologies so they can become discriminating viewers and listeners.

But there should be no expansion of media education when problems of basic literacy have not been solved. A fifth of seven-year-olds and a fifth of 14-year-olds do not reach the expected standard in national tests in English.

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politics

Divorce Bill: Couples to be given the option of attending marriage guidance counselling

Ministers move to stave off new divorce revolt

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES
Legal Affairs Editor

The Government is attempting to buy off a fresh rebellion on its controversial Family Law Bill by earmarking three months at the start of the divorce process for couples to attend marriage guidance counselling if they want it.

But ministers are adamant that they will not yield to demands from "pro-family" Tory rebels and Labour for couples to be forced to meet a counsellor before filing for a no-fault divorce under the Bill.

A Commons committee stage amendment from the right-wing former minister Edward Leigh – the unofficial leader of the rebel Tory MPs – calls for a three-month delay between attending the counselling meeting and presenting a statement of marital breakdown.

Mr Leigh's move raises the scenario of reluctant or long-separated couples, and even victims of violence, being obliged to go through the motions of marriage guidance. It would also add a further three months to the period for "reflection and consideration", which has already been lengthened from 12 to 18 months after last week's revolt by 165 Tory MPs.

Paul Boateng, Labour's legal affairs spokesman, heaped further pressure on the Government by threatening to withdraw Opposition support at the Third Reading unless the Government agreed to force couples to undergo compulsory marriage guidance, albeit during a two-month gap.

Labour's stance, in particular, has been condemned by divorce practitioners as a political device to boost its standing as champion of the family, by a party that ought to know better.

As the Bill now stands, the option of marriage guidance, along with advice to mediate rather than litigate disputes, is to be highlighted to couples in initial information sessions.

Westminster sources said the compromise being drawn up by Jonathan Evans, the junior minister in the Lord Chancellor's Department responsible for the Bill, accepted the argument for an effective litigation or mediation-free zone for the following three months.

The change would give spouses more time to decide whether to take advantage of marriage guidance, rather than immediately pressing on with the divorce process, sources said.

But Mr Evans is implacably opposed to the idea of enforced marriage guidance counselling, and hopes to convince Tory MPs that it would not work. Parallel moves are afoot to ensure that the three-month isolation period is included within the 18 months and not added on to it.

A loyal Tory backbencher is expected to promote an appropriate amendment at the report stage, on the footing that the House of Commons has already decided on an 18-month cooling-off period, not 21 months.

Mr Evans is also responding to non-partisan concerns about the initial information sessions. Group sessions of about eight or 10 people at a time have been mooted, creating what critics say would be a conveyor-belt impression.

In the meantime, Mr Evans agreed during a committee stage debate yesterday to consider at the report stage a general amendment highlighting the importance of marriage guidance counselling.

Chin up: Tony Blair at Labour's press conference on the last day of campaigning for the local elections. He attacked the Government for 'squabbling' and described it as being in 'an advanced stage of disintegration' Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

Backbench beef fury boils over

Tory backbench anger at the apparent impotence of the Government to persuade its European partners to lift the ban on British beef boiled over in the Commons yesterday.

Cheers greeted calls for retaliatory action against French and German exports and for suspending Britain's contribution to the European Union. Repeated assertions by Douglas Hogg, Minister of Agriculture, that "persuasion and negotiation" remained the best way forward were greeted with near-derision by his backbench critics.

When Mr Hogg said all MPs had an obligation to ask themselves what policies were most likely to bring about a speedy removal of the ban, Tony Marlow (C, Northampton N) shouted: "A gunboat."

Reporting back on two days of negotiations with his fellow EU agriculture ministers, Mr Hogg won few points with his offer that the ban on beef by-products tallow, gelatine and semen might soon be lifted.

"Those of us who represent beef and dairy constituencies are running out of patience," Nicholas Winterton (C, Macclesfield) warned the minister. His wife, Ann Winterton (C, Congleton) seemed to have passed that point. "Every man and woman in this country can now see that we in this House are not masters of our destiny," she said. The EU was nothing to do with fairness and scientific fact and everything to do with politics and protecting markets.

With the first cattle due to be killed today – or "processed" according to Mr Hogg – under the scheme for keeping beast over 30 months old out of the food chain, MPs were concerned that the cull might be extended simply to restore confidence in beef elsewhere in Europe.

In a burst of xenophobic excess during Scottish question time, Neil Hamilton, a former Tory minister, said Chancellor Helmut Kohl had proposed a "final solution" to the BSE problem involving the "unnecessary slaughter" of large parts of the British herd. John Townend, chairman of the Thatcherite 92 Group of Tory MPs, said the fishing industry had been savaged by EU policy and now it had started on the dairy and beef industry. He urged Mr Hogg to "tell our friends overseas that if the ban is not lifted in three to four weeks we will take retaliatory action".

Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton SW) warned that any scheme of compulsory killings of healthy cattle in order to reassure European consumers would require legislation which would be "very unlikely" to pass the Commons.

Mr Hogg must have expected a rough ride from the Eurosceptics, who jeered his lines on applying to have the ban set aside by the European Court of Justice. But he may not have anticipated the anger of normally reliable knights of the shire like Peter Emery and Patrick Cormack. Sir Peter, MP for Honiton, said opposition to lifting the ban was political and to the commercial benefit of French, German and Dutch farmers.

Inside Parliament
Stephen Goodwin

MPs from both sides of the Commons and, more pertinently, from both slopes of the Pennines, had earlier joined voices to tilt at another popular demon – the wind turbines on the skylines of their constituencies. Initiating a short debate, Nigel Evans (C, Ribble Valley) said wind farms were ugly, inefficient and intrusive. "We are in danger of industrialising some of our most beautiful countryside."

But Richard Page, a junior industry minister, said if 10 per cent of energy were produced from wind, carbon emissions would be reduced by 8 million tonnes. "That is an immense amount of pollutant, and not something that can be lightly tossed aside."

MPs back 'fraudbusting' Hackney housing chief

NICHOLAS TIMMINS and STEVE BOGGAN

An all-party committee of MPs yesterday came to the aid of Bernard Crofton, Hackney's housing director, saying he was "a fine public servant" who must not be sacked.

Mr Crofton – who has been branded as a liar and crook in a secret report into his "fraudbusting" operations in the north London borough – may find out today if he is to be dismissed when the report's findings is considered by a four-strong committee of councillors.

But Frank Field, the Labour chairman of the cross-party Commons Social Services Committee, said yesterday that it was "vital" that Mr Crofton remain in post. Taxpayers owed him an enormous debt for exposing the degree of fraud in housing and housing benefit, he added.

Mr Field said he was speaking with the authority of the full committee which yesterday strengthened its endorsement of Mr Crofton's actions as it approved a report on benefit fraud to be published later this month. It is expected to call for investigations of housing and other benefit fraud which it will say could be costing taxpayers £2bn in lost housing benefit alone.

"If he goes down, no-one will dare to expose fraud in local government again," Mr Field said. The same tactics which led to Mr Crofton being accused of racism, suspended, then cleared and finally reinstated after he exposed organised fraud in the borough were being used against him again, Mr Field said.

"We have the selective leaking of a report that none of us have seen. I suspect the timing is not an accident." Benefit fraud included organised crime with huge sums of money at stake, Mr Field said.

"In many areas local government officials are frightened of speaking out against organised fraud, and that is why Mr Crofton's position is so crucial. If his career is destroyed it will be difficult, if not impossible, to get going the universal anti-fraud strategy which the committee wants to see in Britain."

A report by Ian Macdonald QC has concluded that Mr Crofton's claims of recruitment fraud among African employees at Hackney were without foundation. He is also accused of dishonestly obtaining re-employment at his £70,000 salary by falsely quoting Andrew Arden QC, a housing law specialist, whom he claimed told him there was a conspiracy to dismiss him.

acceptance and surgery.
"It was like coming home," she said. "When I realised that

behaviour of the school directors breached the 1976 Euro-

but muted, if warm, applause.

honing his potting since the

included in the fusillade.

birth certificates and passports.

Key council battlegrounds in today's local elections

TRAFFORD: No overall control, but Labour run
Conservative 29; Labour 29; Liberal Democrat 5. Conservatives defending 16, Labour 4, Liberal Democrat 1.
Labour target for full control after fulfilling pledges in action programme after ousting Conservatives last year. Row with Tories over Labour plan to consider turning its seven grammar school comprehensive if they win

MACCLESFIELD: Conservative
Conservative 33, Labour 11, Liberal Democrat 12, Others 3.
Conservatives defending 14, Labour 3, Liberal Democrats 3, Others 1.
Conservative seven seat majority could go, leavng council in no overall control

SHEFFIELD: Labour
Conservative 4; Labour 58; Lib Dem 25. Labour defending 20, Conservatives 4 and Liberal Democrats 6.
Bound to stay Labour, but Liberal Democrats have been making gains in city whose reputation for well-run socialism has tarnished. Tories could lose all four seats, turning it into a Conservative-free zone

SOLIHULL: No overall control, but run by Conservatives*
Conservative 21; Labour 14; Lib Dems 10; Others 6. Conservatives defending 10, Labour 4, Lib Dems 1, Others 2
Last Tory toehold on power in the metropolitan authorities
*with ratepayer support

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON: No overall control. lib-dem target
Conservative 12; Labour 12; Lib Dem 15; Others 3. Conservatives defending 8, Labour 4, Lib Dems 1, Others 1.
Tories could suffer embarassment of council going Lib Dem after the defection of their MP, Alan Howarth, to Labour

CHERWELL: No overall control
Conservative 23, Labour 22, Lib Dems 7. Conservatives defending 13, Labour 4.
Traditional Tory territory which Labour could capture this time after sharp gains last year. Includes Banbury with its big BSE-affected cattle market

ROCHDALE: No overall control, run by Lib Dems and Tories
Conservative 11; Labour 26; Liberal Democrat 22; Others 1.
Conservatives defending 7, Labour 3; Liberal Democrats 9, Others 1.
Scene of bitter Labour/Liberal Democrat rivalry with Labour anxious for control not least to prove it can take marginal Rochdale from the Liberal Democrats' Liz Lynne at general election

BOURNEMOUTH: No overall control. Lib-Dem minority admin.
Conservative 21, Labour 6, Lib Dems 26, Others 4. All seats up for election.
Best hope for Conservatives - along with Poole and the new Brighton and Hove - of proving they've turned the corner after last year's record local election disaster

PETERBOROUGH: No overall control
Conservative 18; Labour 23; Lib Dem 1; Others 5. Conservatives are defending 10, Labour 4, Others 3.
Seat of Brian Mawhinney, Conservative party chairman. A Labour target both for its own sake and to demonstrate Labour would take the Parliamentary marginal at a general election

HUNTINGDONSHIRE: Conservative
Conservative 31, Labour 7, Lib Dems 12, Others 3. Conservatives defending 12, Labour 2, Lib Dems 3, Others 1.
John Major's local council. May be the only one to stay blue of the four councils being contested this time which the Conservatives control. Sign of disasterous night for the Tories if they lose control

MILTON KEYNES: No overall control
Redrawn ward boundaries make seat comparisons impossible in contest for this shadow unitary authority. But Labour will study share of vote to see if it indicates a Labour gain in the marginal Parliamentary seat

BASILDON: No overall control. Labour target
Conservative 14; Labour 16; Lib Dems 12. Fifteen seats being defended, all but one Conservative.
Home of Essex man. Key Parliamentary marginal where David Amess, sitting Conservative MP has defected to Southend West

WOKINGHAM: No overall control. Lib Dem target
Conservative 26; Labour 0; Lib Dem 26; Others 1. Conservatives defending 11, Lib Dems 6, Others 1
Seat of John Redwood, last year's Conserative leadership challenger

TUNBRIDGE WELLS: No overall control. Lib-Dem target
Conservative 19, Labour 5, Lib Dems 23. Others 1. Conservatives defending 15, Liberal Democrats 2
Once the truest of blue, now Lib Dems hope for full control

HASTINGS: No overall control
Conservative 5, Labour 13, Liberal Democrats 13, Others 1. Conservatives defending 5, Labour 3, Liberal Demorats 2, Others 1.
Key Labour/Liberal Democrat battle in south east where Conservatives could lose all five seats

Dissident backs the Lib Dems

The dissident Tory Peter Thurnham yesterday suggested that electors should vote Liberal Democrat in today's council elections if they want to guarantee a referendum on Europe.

The MP for Bolton North East, who resigned the Conservative party whip in February and describes himself as an independent, again denied allegations that he is considering joining Paddy Ashdown's party. "I'm very happy sitting on the Government benches as an independent," he said yesterday.

But he compounded the Conservatives' troubles with his controversial voting suggestion, amid fears they are heading for a heavy defeat in today's elections.

"As local electors go to the polls, they should vote for the best candidate to deal with their local concerns, regardless of perceived national party issues," he wrote in his weekly column for his local newspaper, the *Bolton Evening News*. "But if in doubt, remember that the Liberal party is the only party fully committed to both a referendum and to proportional representation which gives a fairer voice to minority parties."

Labour points to Tory tax 'betrayal'

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

The local election campaign closed yesterday with angry exchanges over tax as Tony Blair said Labour would make gains over a Government being punished for its "betrayals of the people" and as Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, insisted that the Conservatives remained "the only party of low taxation".

Mr Blair claimed the Government was now "in an advanced stage of disintegration" with its splits over Europe and divisions over the leadership as he highlighted the "betrayal" represented by 22 tax increases after John Major's election promise of year-on-year tax cuts.

He quoted the Prime Minister at the Conservative local government conference in 1992 as having said: "If you were inventing a policy to destroy confidence, where would you start? You'd start with higher taxes." Confidence had indeed been destroyed, Mr Blair said.

But John Major insisted that raising taxes, whether on individuals, company cars or child benefit, remained "Labour's hidden agenda". And Mr Clarke said that Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, with his pledges of low taxes and spending was "looking an increasingly lonely figure in the Labour movement" after Clare Short's comments on tax and Robin Cook's remarks on Labour's values.

Mr Brown, he said, was attempting to convince business that Labour could run the economy better than the Tories. "He doesn't convince me, and he doesn't convince them".

Labour attempted to play down the scale of its likely gains as the Liberal Democrats predicted only modest gains of 50 to 100 seats. But Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, appeared to admit that a poor result was in view for the Conservatives when he said that while "the feeling of confidence is flowing through" from this year's tax cuts, falling interest rates and lower unemployment, these "may not coincide with local elections".

Some 3,000 council seats are being contested in today's local elections, which exclude Scotland, Wales and London. The Conservatives are defending just over 1,150 seats, Labour just under 1,200 and the Liberal Democrats almost 450.

The limited nature of the contest – a third of the seats in 100 English districts, a third in the 36 metropolitan authorities, and all-out contests for 13 new "shadow" unitary authorities – means relatively few councils are likely to change control.

The parties will assess success and failure on three measures – share of the vote, seats won and lost, and council control changing hands.

If the Conservatives lose fewer than 350 seats they will have improved dramatically over their disastrous showing last year. Up to 500, they will have some limited cause for comfort – a performance better than last year's but still well behind Labour. Losses of more than 600 would first approach and then pass last year's low water mark. Anthing above 700 would be a calamity – and likely to reopen the question of John Major's leadership.

For Labour, gains of fewer than 300 would represent a marked fall on last year's performance while more than 500 would match their achievement last year.

The Liberal Democrats hope for at least 100 gains, and anything above 150 would show their vote was outstripping their opinion poll standing.

In terms of councils, a disastrous Conservative performance could see them lose all four that they control in the current contest, plus Solihull, the one they run on minority control. A good Labour performance could see them take a dozen councils from no overall control, a figure the Liberal Democrats could match if they do well. The Conservatives' best hope of a gain is Bournemouth, which was last fought last year and where a 5 per cent swing could put them back in power at the Liberal Democrats' expense.

What the results mean to John Major

Conservative losses	Measure of Tory performance
300 seats	Dramatic improvement on last year's disastrous results
500 seats	Better than last year but still well behind Labour
600 seats	Tories begin to sink below last year's low-water mark
700 seats	Calamity. Question marks over Mr Major's leadership

news

Britain sets sail with an old naval foe

JOHN LICHFIELD and CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY

Ending centuries of bitter rivalry, the Royal Navy and the French Marine Nationale are moving towards the kind of formal partnership which already exists between the air forces of the two nations.

A "letter of intent" on Franco-British naval co-operation was signed earlier this month by the First Sea Lord, Admiral Jock Slater, and his French opposite number. A detailed agreement may be signed by defence ministers in early June.

In Britain, the agreement will be seen as an amicable conclusion to a tradition of maritime conflict going back to the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 and beyond. In France, it will be seen as an attempt to efface the memory of the Royal Navy's destruction of the French fleet at anchor at Mers-el-Kebir in 1940 to prevent "friendly" warships falling into German hands.

The naval initiative – suggested by Britain – follows the creation last year of the Franco-British Air Group which co-ordinates joint operations such as airlifts to trouble-spots. Given the long history of French and British maritime rivalry, a naval agreement may have far greater psychological and political impact.

President Jacques Chirac arrives in Britain on 14 May on the first French state visit for 12 years, but the naval discussions are not expected to warrant more than a passing mention. However, a ministerial announcement is expected soon afterwards.

Ministry of Defence sources say they do not see the move as a "first step" towards a Franco-British or European naval force, but the arrangement fits into a pattern of increasingly formal links between European armed forces, which could ultimately mesh with political moves towards a European defence arm within the Nato alliance.

The Royal Navy has well-defined procedures for operating with the German and Dutch navies, but relations with the French are less well-developed because France has not been part of Nato's integrated military structure for 30 years. France is considering rejoining Nato military operations, but only if the alliance develops an "identifiable and operational" European wing.

Apart from the air unit and naval plans, Anglo-French military co-operation is thriving in a number of areas – despite the anti-European rhetoric of the Secretary of State for Defence, Michael Portillo. An Anglo-French nuclear committee is said to meet regularly and to have made considerable progress since President Chirac came to power last May, although both sides are secretive about the committee's agenda.

RAF to make final flight from Germany in 2002

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

The Royal Air Force is to leave its last base in Germany in 2002, after 57 years, according to the defence White Paper published yesterday.

The announcement that the last four squadrons of Tornado GR1 bombers will withdraw from RAF Brüggen brings to an end an era during which, for much of the time, Britain maintained a large air force on the Continent. The main reason for the withdrawal is the disappearance of a direct threat from the East, although the White Paper stresses that the "pace and progress of military, political and economic reforms in Russia continue to be significant factors in our defence planning". Following the end of the Cold War, the RAF closed two of its four German bases – Wildenroth and Gütersloh. The decision to close the third base, Laarbruch in 1999, has already been announced.

Mr Portillo said yesterday the decision was subject to consultation with Nato allies. Asked about the 25,000 Army troops in Germany, he said: "There are no plans to change that."

CM 3223 Statement on the Defence Estimates 1996, HMSO, London, May 1996, £13.00

MP 'used case as political platform'

MICHAEL STREETER

A Conservative MP was using a court case as a "political platform" against Tony Blair's press secretary, the High Court heard yesterday.

Charles Gray QC, for the defence, said the malicious falsehood suit brought by Rupert Allason against Alastair Campbell and Mirror Group Newspapers had attracted widespread media publicity involving the senior Labour Party aide and his leader.

He said: "Mr Allason has used the case as a political platform ... protected by judicial proceedings to make allegations that he must have known and intended to grab the headlines."

These included headlines, such as "Blair's punch-up aide is accused of half-truths", which were "wholly obscure" in relation to the issues of the case.

Mr Allason, the MP for Torbay, is suing Mr Campbell, former *Daily Mirror* political editor, Mirror Group Newspapers and another former *Mirror* journalist over an article in the *Mirror* on 20 November, 1992, claiming that 50 Labour MPs had signed a Commons motion attacking the Tory MP.

The MP says the Early Day Motion, which urged him to donate some of his substantial libel damages from MGN to struggling Maxwell pensioners, had only attracted seven names and was false, malicious and had cost him a $100,000 book deal.

Mr Gray said suggestions Mr Campbell had written the motion were "conjured up out of thin air". Another Mirror political journalist, David Bradshaw, had admitted conceiving the idea of the EDM, and had written a "minor, very short item on an inside" page which Mr Campbell had not even read.

The evidence showed "overwhelmingly" there was no malice in the story, and Mr Allason had not lost financially as a result. The judge, Sir Maurice Drake, will give his verdict today.

Family Credit 'little use to unemployed'

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

Family Credit, the Government's flagship benefit for those in low paid work, does a far better job of protecting people already in work than getting the unemployed back to work, new research showed yesterday.

The finding challenges the assumption behind plans of both Labour and the Conservatives to boost in-work benefits in order to get the jobless back to work. Family Credit seems to be acting as a safety net for those who are already working rather than as an incentive for the unemployed to take work.

The study, funded by the Department of Social Security, examined the work histories of 1,000 families leaving Family Credit in September 1993.

It showed that only 10 per cent had started to claim on entering a new job. Most had been in work for a long time, using the benefit to stay working when their income fell or when one partner became unemployed.

An even smaller proportion – 2 per cent – successfully used Family Credit to leave Income Support and earn enough to work their way out of Family Credit.

Alex Bryson, the Policy Studies Institute researcher who carried out the study, said: "It shows there is no certainty that offering an in-work benefit is going to act as a serious incentive for people to move into low paid work from unemployment."

Other barriers, such as the uncertainty of taking low paid work when on the dole, may need to be addressed.

Around 600,000 couples and lone parents now claim Family Credit and the Government is about to pilot an extension of the benefit to single people through a new Earnings Top-up.

The benefit does a good job of keeping low-paid families in work "tiding them over until things get better", the study concludes. But it works better for couples than lone parents, many of whom end up unemployed again.

Drain journey: The explorer, Sir Ranulph Fiennes, walking through Fleet sewer in central London yesterday to launch National Water Month. Sir Ranulph will also embark on a month-long 'great water journey' that will take him in and out of sewers around Britain Photograph: Philip Meech

هكذا من الأصل

Britain's film industry is shrinking. When the world's cinematic glitterati jet into Cannes for this year's film festival they will head for the prestigious conference hall. But behind the scenes, a humble converted caravan will be flying the Union Flag, writes James Cusick.

Billed as "The smallest cinema in the world", the finishing touches to the mobile movie house are taking place in Battersea, London (right). After taking it to Cannes, Richard Kilgarriff and Emma Dugdal Moore (left) will move on to the Edinburgh Film Festival, then Utah where it may play a supporting role in Robert Redford's Sundance Festival.

Forget Cinemascope. It seats 10 in style. Velvet drapes, rich Michelangelo-style murals in golds, reds, and greens that would be at home in the Sistine Chapel.

Photographs: Nicholas Turpin

Task force on drugs urges new approach

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

The cost to the taxpayer of drug-related crime could be dramatically reduced by investing in treatment services for addicts, according to a government-commissioned report published yesterday.

A survey of more than 1,100 addicts shows that in the three months before they started treatment they committed around 70,000 crimes, mainly theft, which, it is estimated, would cost society £34m over two years – far greater than the cost of treatment.

The addicts in the survey were largely heroin users, average age 29, and had used the drug for an average of nine years. They had "an extensive treatment history". Despite this, the task force which has conducted the most comprehensive review of treatment services for drug users in England to date, said there is no doubt that treatment works, although progress is slow.

The Rev John Polkinghorne, who chaired the task force, said yesterday: "Drug misuse is a complex and diverse issue. It causes immense harm to individuals and society. Our review clearly shows that treatment works in reducing that harm. It also makes clear that there are no 'magic bullets', and that treatment must be matched to the needs of individuals.

"A key finding is that to be effective, treatment must embrace care in the widest sense. This might include addressing housing needs, child-care issues, retraining for employment, and general support." Syringe exchanges, and the prescribing of substitute drugs help minimise harm and need to be at the centre of the overall approach to treatment, he added.

The task force is calling for renewed efforts to reach users not in touch with the services, and "better use" of those contacts to influence behaviour.

It says a local, co-ordinated approach is needed, and health purchasers and providers should be more flexible over treatment programmes. There is no single preferred form of treatment for users, and the benefits of methadone reduction programmes, oral methadone maintenance programmes, residential rehabilitation projects and specialist in-patient drug dependency units are highlighted in the report. It recommends that the opportunities presented in prison to treat addicts must not be ignored.

No contact opportunity should be missed, Dr Polkinghorne said, calling for health checks to be offered at needle exchanges and other first points of contact, and hepatitis B vaccinations to be more widely available. Counselling and support services should be recognised as core, not subsidiary, components of treatment, he added. During their investigation, the task force visited 27 treatment centres in nine areas, took evidence from 114 individuals or organisations, and commissioned eight reviews by leading international authorities.

It also commissioned a programme of new research – the National Treatment Outcome Research Study – which tracked 1,100 addicts over 18 months and their responses to different forms of treatment.

Announcing an additional £6m for services for young people and methadone programmes, the Health Minister, John Bowis, said the Department of Health would study the report's 80 recommendations and would draw up guidance for health and local authorities.

■ *The Task Force to Review Services for Drug Misusers*; Department of Health Distribution Unit, PO Box 410, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS23 7LN.

DAILY POEM

The California of the Mind

By Fran Landesman

You've never been to California
But if you ever go there you will find
There really is no California
Like the California of the mind

There's fear and loathing in the air there
Stay home and let your fantasies unwind
'Cause when you get there, there's no 'there' there
Just armies of the blind leading the blind

The local beauties would all ignore you
The fads and follies would only bore you
The price of dreaming would simply floor you
On Malibu shore it's no fun any more

You won't find stardust on those beaches
The gods and goddesses have all resigned
So stay at home and pick your peaches
In the California of the mind

Fran Landesman was a "Beat" poet of the 1950s and 1960s, performing and writing with Kerouac, Ginsberg and Burroughs. In its purest form, Beat walks a narrow line between camp and mysticism, a disdain for bourgeois values allied with comedy and brooding apocalypse. Landesman ("one of my heroes", according to Tom Waites) subsequently enjoyed tremendous success as a lyricist for Ella Fitzgerald, Shirley Bassey, Bette Midler and Barbra Streisand. This poem appears in *Rhymes at Midnight*, published last week by Golden Handshake at £4.99.

international

France back at Mid-East top table

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

After a difficult two weeks in French-Israeli relations, the Israeli Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, yesterday said there was "no contradiction" between French and Israeli policies and Israel was prepared to help with reconstruction in Lebanon. He also reiterated that Israel had no "territorial or political ambitions in Lebanon". Mr Peres was speaking after lunching with President Jacques Chirac at the Elysée during a stopover in Paris.

Although it had been long planned, the encounter signalled the intention to mend fences and amounted also to mutual recognition that France had won a foothold, however small, in the US-dominated Middle East peace process.

In another move that may have been designed to improve France's image in Israel, Mr Peres said France recently broke up a group, linked to the Iranian-sponsored Hizbollah organisation, that was planning attacks on Israeli targets in Paris. Neither Israeli nor French officials would confirm this or give details. Until that disclosure on Monday, recent exchanges had been cool. Israeli ministers were less than accommodating to Mr Chirac's special envoy and Foreign Minister, Hervé de Charette, during his 12-day Middle East shuttle.

On arrival in Tel Aviv, he was told it was "too early" for a peace mission; as he arrived for a second attempt, officials said there were too many people involved in too many initiatives.

Mr Chirac's visit to Lebanon last month, when he had called for a "free and independent Lebanon", the strength of French condemnation of Israeli action in southern Lebanon, including the shelling of Qana, and the speed with which Mr Chirac sent Mr de Charette to Lebanon in a peace initiative – later scaled down to a "goodwill mission" – all predisposed Israel to regard France as ill-equipped to play the role of honest broker.

Now that France has a place alongside Syria, Lebanon and the US in the "surveillance group" set up to guarantee the ceasefire in southern Lebanon, both have an interest in restoring some civility. France was also gratified by the response of Lebanon, whose President, Elias Hrawi, stopped in Paris on Tuesday and paid tribute to France's role and to Mr Chirac in particular for his "courageous initiative".

The visits by Mr Hrawi and Mr Peres on successive days and within less than a week of the truce agreement allowed officials and commentators to speak of a return of France to Middle East diplomacy, where it regards its ties with Lebanon and its channels to Syria – and to a lesser extent Iran and Iraq – as unique assets.

While France conceded that US mediation was always going to be essential to any truce deal, Mr de Charette insisted on his return that "80 per cent of the text of the ceasefire agreement derived from ideas set out by France from the beginning".

This, however, is not the official US view, or at least not the view being presented for domestic pre-election consumption in Washington.

On Tuesday the US State Department spokesman, Nicholas Burns, rebutted France's claim of an "80-per-cent" contribution. "It is perfectly clear to all those who travelled with the Secretary of State," he said, "that the great success of the ceasefire accord is largely due to the American initiative. The text of the negotiation document was drawn from an American draft; the ideas were American ideas."

Officials in Paris and Washington have denied reports of friction between Mr de Charette and the Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, during their peace missions, insisting that they were in close contact throughout and effectively working together.

US rolls out red carpet for Arafat

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

Not long ago reviled as a terrorist, Yasser Arafat yesterday came to the Oval Office as a national leader in his own right, pledging to stick to his agreements with Israel, and pleading for more US and international aid for the Palestinian people.

He has been to Washington three times since his handshake of peace with Yitzhak Rabin at the White House in 1993, but never before by himself. Previous meetings here with President Bill Clinton were essentially ceremonial. But this one-hour, one-on-one business session with Mr Clinton meant more – a symbol of how the Palestinian leader is now a "routine" protagonist in US diplomacy in the Middle East.

His itinerary was that of any head of government. On Tuesday he also briefly met the Israeli Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, to prepare this month's final round of negotiations to define Palestinian statehood in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Minutes after he stepped out of a limousine, in military uniform and wearing his black-and-white *keffiyeh*, Mr Arafat was publicly praised by Mr Clinton for pushing through the Palestinian National Council the decision to scrap the PLO's 1964 covenant demanding the destruction of the state of Israel.

"Under difficult circumstances, he kept that commitment," Mr Clinton said, a reference to recent fighting between Israel and Hizbollah in southern Lebanon, in which hundreds of civilians died under Israeli bombardment and which at one point threatened to overturn the entire Middle East peace process.

Although his dealings with the President cannot aspire to match the mutual-admiration society Mr Clinton and Mr Peres are conducting in an election year for both of them, Mr Arafat's standing at the White House puts him in a strong position to demand that the US and its allies deliver on pledges of aid for the Palestinian state.

In an emotional speech to a Middle East economic conference on Tuesday, he said Palestine had reached "the red line of starvation". His people would respect their commitments to Israel "but can the American people live beside another nation facing starvation?"

US officials say Washington has come up with $175m (£116m) of the $500m it promised to the Palestinian Authority to build infrastructure in the regions now under partial self-rule. But Mr Arafat said only $27m of a total $1.3bn promised by all countries had been forthcoming. Without tangible material benefit from the deals with Israel, support for the peace process might wither.

Indeed, after Israel closed its borders with the West Bank and Gaza following recent suicide bombings, severing thousands of Palestinians from their jobs in Israel, ordinary Palestinians are worse off than before the peace accords were signed.

■ **Brussels** – An Iranian ship that docked recently in Belgium carried arms which could have been used in a terrorist attack in Germany, according to the Antwerp public prosecutor's office. **Reuter reports.**

Initially police described the 14 March find on board the *Inan Kollahdooz* as explosives but a closer investigation showed them to be a mortar bomb and launcher. They were destined for Munich, where police tightened security at Israeli premises and other possible targets after Antwerp customs officers found the "explosives" during a routine inspection of cargo.

Moments from execution, a killer's final cry for his son

Face of death: Liao Yongxiong, convicted of killing four people in a bank robbery, shouts to relatives to look after his young son after he was sentenced to die in front of 4,700 people in a stadium in Zhongshai, China. He was immediately taken away and shot Photograph: Dickson Lee

Chinese document reveals Hong Kong riot fears

Hong Kong (Reuter) — A magazine yesterday said it had obtained a leaked internal document prepared for the Peking leadership predicting violent riots could erupt in the territory upon its hand-over to China next year.

The independent Chinese-language monthly *Cheng Ming* quoted the document as saying that rioting stirred up by Taiwan and US interests seeking to embarrass Peking may rock Hong Kong after it is handed back to China at midnight on 30 June 1997.

"In the early days of the [post-1997] government, under the guidance of US anti-Chinese interests and with the support of Taiwan authorities, violent and armed riots could occur in Hong Kong," the magazine quoted the document as saying.

Cheng Ming said the document was prepared by Peking's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, the department responsible for the transition of the British colony to Chinese rule. It added that the document predicted foreign investment in Hong Kong could drop by 20 to 80 per cent during the transition period, driving many Hong Kong professionals to emigrate and civil servants to take early retirement.

The projected collapse in investment and potential for violence are separate topics in the document. The investment decline could begin in the last quarter this year and stretch into 1998.

The document predicted Britain would continue to play its "democracy card" and "public opinion card" after the handover, with the aim of retaining influence in the community of 6 million people, the magazine said. It said the analysis predicted an increasing number of western, anti-Chinese organisations would set up in Hong Kong.

The colonial administration had deliberately liberalised Hong Kong laws to let international anti-Chinese, anti-communist organisations legally operate and interfere in the territory's affairs after 1997.

Clinton driven to oil sell-off

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

He may be riding sky-high in the polls, with his demoralised Republican opponents nowhere to be seen. But there is one risk President Bill Clinton dare not take in an election year – to interfere with the God-given right of Americans to drive big cars powered by the cheapest petrol on earth.

Hence this week's unusual decision: to sell 12 million barrels from the US strategic petroleum reserve. The amount may be a drop in the ocean of US oil consumption but the gesture is intended to signal the deepest White House concern at the recent rise in the cost of petrol, which has driven up pump prices by more than 20 per cent in many states.

The increase will hardly bring tears to the rest of the world's eyes. In Washington DC, for instance, ordinary grade petrol still only costs $1.29 (84p) a gallon, and even in California, where special factors have pushed up the price of premium grade to some $2 (£1.33), that is still a fraction of the £2.65 ($4) paid in England for the admittedly slightly larger imperial gallon – not to mention $4.50 in Sweden and almost $5 in Italy.

That, however, overlooks the politics of the matter. In the land where the car is an object of veneration only outstripped by the Almighty, the peak summer driving season is fast approaching when Americans will feel the pain directly in their pockets. More important still, California – where complaints are fiercest – also happens to carry 54 electoral college votes, a fifth of the total needed to win the presidential contest this November.

President Clinton therefore cannot stand idly by, especially when he raised petrol prices by 4.3 cents a gallon in his 1993 deficit reduction package, which every Republican in Congress voted against. Scrambling for means of reducing the President's lead in the polls (an unprecedented 58 per cent to 37 per cent in the latest *USA Today*/CNN poll), Senator Bob Dole, the presumptive Republican nominee, has demanded Congress scrap the tax increase. An uneasy White House has opted to sell oil from the strategic reserve instead.

In fact, industry experts point out, the move will have virtually no practical effect. The amount involved is less than a single day of US refinery consumption, while after the lifting of speed restrictions last year, Americans are driving faster, with the fashion now for jeeps and utility vehicles – "gas-guzzlers" which get 15 miles or less per gallon.

Off the wall: A cobbler in Calcutta, capital of Marxist-ruled West Bengal, works beneath a clutch of election campaign slogans Photograph: Reuter

Indian general election: Front-runner attempts to temper Hindu extremism

'Mr Nice' strives to bottle genie of religious divide

TIM MCGIRK
New Delhi

The man who may become India's next prime minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, from the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was at his campaign headquarters in Lucknow when the phone rang. It was the Muslim film actor, Raj Babbar, calling.

He is Mr Vajpayee's main rival in this religiously charged campaign for a Lucknow parliamentary seat. Voting starts today, the second round of the Indian elections.

"He said that as an elder brother (an Indian term of respect) I should bless him. And so I did," said Mr Vajpayee, chuckling that his main challenger, and a Muslim at that, should seek blessings from the leader of a right-wing Hindu party that most Indian Muslims have learned to fear.

That is because Mr Vajpayee has a reputation as a bright, decent man, a liberal who keeps his distance from the Hindu extremists within the BJP who wave tridents and saffron-coloured flags and shout anti-Muslim slogans.

He is an accomplished ex-foreign minister with a natural, populist manner (he can sling himself on to a rope charpoy bed at a roadside tea-stand and have the crowd belly-laughing at his jokes). The only jab which his opponents can make against him is that because of his broad-mindedness, Mr Vajpayee may be "the right man in the wrong party".

When Hindu extremists tore down a 16th-century Mogul mosque in Ayodhya, igniting communal riots across the country, Mr Vajpayee is said to have wept and called it "an outrage", while other BJP leaders rejoiced.

But the "wrong party" may at last be right for Mr Vajpayee. The BJP seems to be as elastic as Hinduism, a faith which embraces a multitude of gods and seemingly conflicting practices. Having sensed that Indians have lost the stomach for the BJP's strident Hinduism after the 1992 riots and killings, the party is – apparently – transforming itself into Mr Vajpayee's more moderate image.

Mr Vajpayee may still appear at campaign rallies flanked by actors dressed up as heroes from the *Ramayana* epic, but his speeches are not about destroying more Muslim places of worship but about matters that are closer to the common Indian: government corruption, over-population, and how economic reforms have failed to reach the countryside.

Self-possessed and with a wry smile, Mr Vajpayee looks equally at ease whether he's greeting a visiting head of state or riding a bullock cart along the dusty campaign trail in Uttar Pradesh state.

In the likely event that neither the BJP nor the ruling Congress Party wins a clear majority, Mr Vajpayee is better placed than his combative companions in the BJP triumvirate – LK Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi – to strike a deal with coalition partners.

When votes are finally tallied, on 10 May, after the third stage of elections, forecasts indicate that the BJP may emerge as the largest party, with about 200 of the 543 parliamentary seats.

"We have no thoughts of forming a coalition, but if we fall short we'll seek support from the regional parties," said Mr Vajpayee, 69. At rallies, the grim-faced Black Cat commandos assigned to protect Mr Vajpayee seem genuinely to like him: they even grin at his jokes.

Mr Vajpayee insists he never wanted to be the BJP's candidate for prime minister, that he is a born loner, a misfit.

But shortly before elections, the party president, Mr Advani, was snared in a corruption scandal that was devised by the Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao, to cripple his enemies.

Mr Vajpayee was clean and he stepped into Mr Advani's place. Electorally, it was probably a stroke of good fortune for the BJP that Mr Vajpayee got the job. Even Mr Advani admitted that he lacks his replacement's "mass leader" qualities.

But even if Mr Vajpayee has gained the respect of his film-star rival and other Muslims and moderates, he has failed to dispel the suspicion that many Indians feel towards his party. They say that the religious extremists within the BJP may not let Mr Vajpayee stray too far into the centre.

The BJP manifesto pledges to expand India's nuclear status, which will speed up its atomic arms race with its Muslim neighbour, Pakistan. Nor is there much chance of India signing nuclear-disarmament treaties under the BJP. "We need nuclear weapons to protect India," Mr Vajpayee insisted. "We want to live in a nuclear-free world, but India cannot go along with this nuclear apartheid in which some nations have the bomb and others don't."

If elected, the BJP has said it will take a firmer stand against Muslim insurgents in Kashmir, though it is difficult to imagine how much tougher it could get: during this six-year revolt more than 20,000 Kashmiris have been killed by Indian security forces, human-rights monitors said. The BJP also vows to change the constitution, stripping away the special status held by religious and linguistic minorities.

Mr Vajpayee may also be under pressure from BJP traditionalists who want to shut the door on some multi-national companies, only recently allowed into India.

The BJP insists Indian values are being eroded by consumerism and loose western morality seen on imported Hollywood films and on Rupert Murdoch's satellite television beaming down to India.

Australia in silent tribute to victims of massacre

ROBERT MILLIKEN
Hobart

Tasmania stood still yesterday. The rest of Australia followed suit. At 10.30am, people from Queensland to Canberra, on farms and stock exchange floors, stopped and bowed their heads for one minute to honour the 35 people who died in the Port Arthur massacre last Sunday.

Outside St David's Anglican cathedral in Hobart men wept, women held each other for comfort, children clutched bunches of flowers. Police officers and soldiers looked bewildered at the enormity of the terror that has shaken the country. They had erected stands to accommodate 2,000 people outside the cathedral but thousands more came and sat in silence, forming a sea of faces along the narrow street as the bells of St David's tolled and a lone piper played while the grieving families of the victims arrived for the memorial service.

Inside the fine, stone cathedral another 1,000 people, including the country's political leaders, gathered. From the pulpit, Sir William Deane, the governor-general, read a message from the Queen, offering prayers and expressing the same shock and sorrow that she felt just two months ago over the massacre at Dunblane, Scotland.

The Rt Rev Phillip Newell, the Bishop of Tasmania, could hardly be speaking both for Dunblane and for Port Arthur when he said: "The suddenness, the senselessness of the assault and the scope of the carnage has immersed us in a sorrow that we have never known before."

Tony Rundle, the premier of Tasmania said: "No-one in our community goes untouched by this wickedness. The pain is etched in every face, in every anguished voice, in every grieving heart."

There were readings by Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist followers. None of the speakers even tried to answer the hard-hitting questions of all, and the ones that will stay with Tasmanians for ever: How? Why? But, in this conservative, closely-knit community, where emotions are rarely displayed, the collective outpouring of grief was a moving experience.

Before yesterday's service, Australia's three federal political leaders flew by helicopter to the massacre scene at Port Arthur, 60 miles south of Hobart. John Howard, the Prime Minister, Kim Beazley, the Labor opposition leader, and Cheryl Kernot, leader of the Australian Democrats, laid a wreath together on the steps of the Broad Arrow café, where the gunman shot dead 20 of his victims as they sat at tables.

The café takes its name from the emblem printed on the shirts of the 12,500 convicts who passed through Port Arthur's prison gates for almost 50 years until 1877. The café, once a happy rest spot for tourists as they explored the prison's ruins, is now closed, never to be re-opened. It is likely to be demolished and replaced by a memorial stone.

John Edwards, a carpenter at the tourist centre, finished painting the café's windows so that passers-by could no longer glimpse the blood-stained legacy of the charnel house that it became last Sunday afternoon.

I walked down a tree-lined road on which a teddy bear and three bunches of flowers marked the spot where one of Mr Edwards's colleagues, Nanette Mikac, and her daughters Alannah, six, and Madeline, three, were shot dead at point-blank range. Mrs Mikac hosted night-time "ghost tours" of the ruins. Walter, her husband, was playing golf nearby when his family were murdered.

Like most staff at Port Arthur, Mr Edwards knew Martin Bryant, the 28 year-old former local resident who is accused of the massacre. "We always had an eerie feeling about him," he said.

Small groups of people arrived to lay flowers on the café steps. The old prisoners' parade ground, now a lawn, was dusted with autumn leaves. The harbour next to it glistened. Mr Edwards had worked into the early hours of Monday evacuating the 19 people injured in the shooting spree. "I feel helpless now," he said. "Helpless."

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international

May Day celebrations: Resurgent Communists lead opposition to Yeltsin as Castro enjoys display of strength

Russia basks in return to its Red flag past

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

He had given the entire country the rest of the week off. He had restored their right to fly their beloved red Soviet-era victory flag. He had promised them extra welfare, bigger pensions, quicker pay. Yet had the vote-hungry Boris Yeltsin peeped over the parapets of the Kremlin at 11am yesterday he would wondered if all this had achieved anything at all.

Sweeping across the river Moskva towards his fortified seat of power was a tide of Red flags carried by thousands of his opponents. It was May Day and, with the election season well under way, the Communists were not going to miss the chance to parade their foot soldiers.

In the thick of the crowd, striding along purposefully through the drizzle, was the stocky figure of Gennady Zyuganov, his chief rival and, as leader of the resurgent Communist Party of the Russian Federation, the personification of fears – both here and abroad – that Russia is poised to reverse her reforms.

Mr Zyuganov has long argued – at least in the West – that he is a moderate, more social democratic than hardline socialist. The same cannot be said of his army. "Power must belong to the people! Workers must have the right to work! Zyuganov for president!" blared the loudspeaker mounted on a truck at the head of the procession, before savaging the "Traitor Gorbachev". Behind it came a line of men, carrying a huge banner: "For Honest Work Against Parasites."

The three-mile march was dotted with landmarks of the triumphs and failure of post-Communist Russia – the glimmering but hugely expensive golden dome of the newly rebuilt Church of Christ the Saviour; a building site where the authorities are planning to erect a vast statue of Peter the Great; and hundreds of armed police in a back street, just in case of trouble from the Chechens.

The livery-clad doormen of Maxim's restaurant, where a meal costs three times the average monthly salary. The grubby Metro stations, now populated with beggars, homeless tramps and hawkers trying to raise a bob or two by selling animals, knick-knacks, even themselves.

Boris Yeltsin: His reforms have left many alienated

Across one thoroughfare the city authorities – whose mayor, Yuri Luzhkov, is a Yeltsin supporter – had hung out a sign, evidently intended to mollify those who have lost out under capitalism: "Good brotherhood is better than wealth."

On May Day during Soviet times the authorities used to hang out huge portraits of the Politburo. Starved of information, the population would study the position and size of each picture for clues as to who was going up, and who down. Yesterday, as an estimated 3.5 million Russians took to the streets across the country, the signs were easier to read.

Some 10,000 people turned out to listen to Mr Zyuganov, standing beneath a statue of Karl Marx opposite the Bolshoi theatre. On the other side of the city, about half that number appeared to listen to Mr Yeltsin call for a "radical change for Russia" – borrowing a leaf out his opponents' book. Ignoring his heart problems, the 65-year-old president then danced a jig with a woman in traditional peasant's dress.

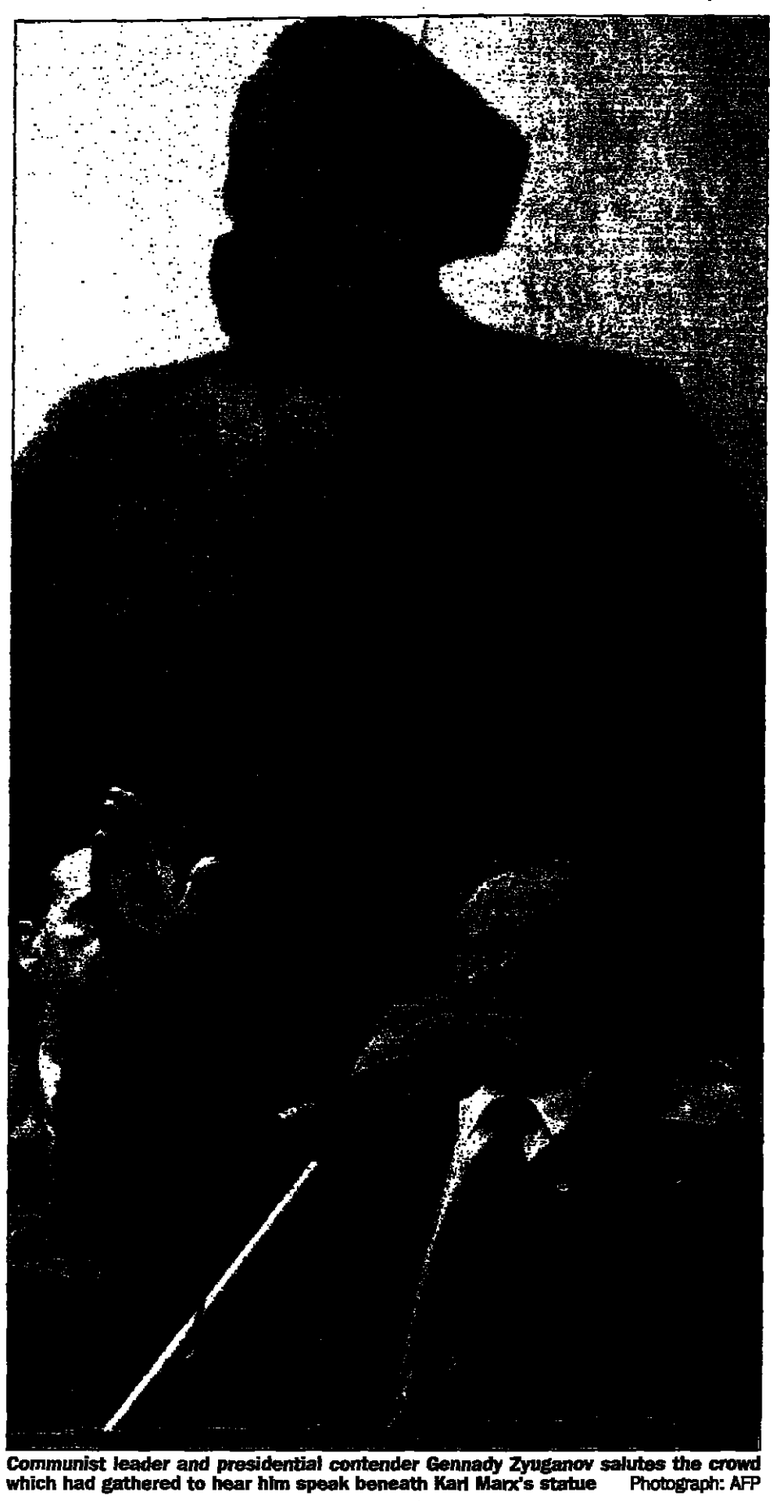
Mr Zyuganov was on his best behaviour, confining himself to some routine railing against Mr Yeltsin's control of the media and a warning that the elections could be rigged.

Those who say Communists are going to turn back the clock should look at Mr Yeltsin's record, he argued. "Russia's territory has shrunk to the level of three or four hundred years ago. Our living standards have slumped to those of the 1950s." Crime is as bad as it was in the civil war; production has come to a standstill. The crowd cheered, though not with much gusto.

One suspected they wanted redder meat. For that, they had to turn to the hardliner Victor Anpilov, head of Working Russia, a smaller neo-Stalinist group which Mr Zyuganov has wooed, anxious to net the 5 million votes it won in last year's parliamentary elections. Yeltsin was a "drunk", he bellowed; his aides were all "scoundrels".

But even he was a kitten, compared to some in the crowd. An elderly woman turned to a knot of western journalists, her face full of contempt. "Did you know that Yeltsin is a Jew? Yup, he's half-Jewish. So is his wife." In the distance an anti-semitic poster bobbed above the crowd's head, not far from a picture of old Joe himself.

■ Chechen rebel leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev met reporters yesterday to dismiss claims by the pro-Russian Chechen government that he had been killed in fighting, Reuter reports.



Communist leader and presidential contender Gennady Zyuganov salutes the crowd which had gathered to hear him speak beneath Karl Marx's statue Photograph: AFP

Cubans defy US to show loyalty

JOHN RICE
Associated Press

Havana — Red flags and portraits of revolutionary heroes bobbed above the heads of hundreds of thousands of marchers yesterday as Cubans called forth by President Fidel Castro marched to commemorate May Day.

The march began with Pedro Ross, the head of the Cuban labour movement, shouting "Socialism or death! Fatherland or death! We will be victorious!"

Loudspeakers blared patriotic music as marchers in rows 50 to 60 across filed past Castro, who watched from a reviewing platform at the Plaza of the Revolution but did not speak.

The rally served as a protest against the Helms-Burton Act, enacted last month by US politicians to strangle foreign investment in Cuba. The Bill was passed after Cuba shot down two aircraft from a Florida-based anti-Castro group that had violated Cuban air-space.

The law appears to have made some businesses reconsider investments in Cuba, but has also rallied international support for Cuba from nearly all US allies, who consider the law a violation of its sovereignty.

As if to demonstrate his defiance of the newly tightened US sanctions, Castro earlier declared that Cuban socialism is stronger than ever.

"We are so satisfied to be called internationalists, to be called socialists, to be called communists," Castro said in a three-hour speech closing a Communist Party meeting.

The speech set the stage for yesterday's march, the first major May Day celebration on the island for three years. It was meant to provide evidence of renewed confidence as Cuba recovers from an economic crisis caused by the collapse of its socialist allies in Europe.

Cuban exiles from Florida had planned to send a flotilla of up to 25 boats to the edges of Cuba's territory, but with predictions of rough weather only three boats left Key West.

IN BRIEF

Turks killed in May Day police clash

Istanbul — Two Turks were killed yesterday in a clash with police in May Day rallies. The clash broke out when police tried to search people gathering for a demonstration organised by unions in Istanbul's Kadikoy district.

"They were not demonstrators. They were the members of illegal leftist organisations, and their purpose was to create such an incident. Police fired into the air," an official from the Istanbul Security Directorate said. *Reuter*

Ex-CIA boss hunted

Rock Point, Maryland — Divers, guided by dogs trained to find bodies in water, went out again yesterday in hopes of finding the former CIA Director William Colby, presumed dead in a canoeing accident over the weekend. *AP*

'Bandit' ban lifted

New Delhi — India's Supreme Court lifted a ban on a film about former bandit Phoolan Devi, who is running for parliament. *Reuter*

Rockets kill child

Islamabad — A child was killed and two civilians were wounded during rebel rocket attacks on Kabul, government radio reported. *Reuter*

Suicide bid Part II

Bucharest — A depressed Romanian who survived a jump from a 10-storey building is looking for a better way to kill himself. "I'll find a method in the end to get rid of this dirty life," he said. *Reuter*

No foreign films

Jakarta – Indonesia's five private television stations have been told not to screen foreign films unless they have been dubbed into the Indonesian language, the official Antara news agency said. *AP*

Lesbians lose fight

Amsterdam — A Dutch court, sitting less than a month after parliament voted to legalise same-sex marriages, rejected applications by two lesbian couples to be legally acknowledged as adoptive parents. Reuter

Tiny tree give-away

Madrid — The outgoing Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez has donated 80 of his beloved bonsai miniatmre trees to Madrid's botanical gardens where they are to go on show to the public next year. *Reuter*

هكذا من الأصل

Germans ignore day of protest over cuts

MRE KARACS
Dortmund

The German trade unions' attle against cuts in the welfare tate got off to a poor start esterday as millions of their nembers ignored calls for mass lemonstrations and opted for spot of gardening in Labour Day's glorious sunshine.

The biggest crowds gathered n Berlin. But even there, the 0,000 marching under union anners were eclipsed by the roups of left- and right-wing adicals who battled with police n working-class districts. After a night of rioting, some 4,500 police armed with water cannon and tear gas struggled all day to restore order.

With unemployment at a post-war high and the government poised to embark on a severe austerity programme, union bosses had hoped for a heavy turn-out. Talks with the government and the employers broke down last week after Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced a package of welfare cuts and measures to loosen the labour market, which the unions say amount to an "employers' charter".

But on yesterday's evidence, union bosses' fury with Mr Kohl and threats to mobilise workers appear to have found only a faint echo among their members. In Dortmund, at the heart of the Ruhr, a mere 5,000 gathered to hear the movement's most charismatic leader, Klaus Zwickel, head of the mighty IG-Metall.

A chorus of miners warmed up the crowd with a jazzed-up rendition of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy". Mr Zwickel donned a cloth cap for the occasion and came armed with ferocious rhetoric. "We will not hesitate for one moment to resort to all means available to the union struggle," he thundered.

"We will not let the rights of the weak be wiped out. The time for talking is over, the time for action has arrived," he went on. The audience murmured its approval as representatives of the toiling masses of the Middle East loudly advertised their disparate causes.

Mr Zwickel, with a membership of nearly 3 million in the engineering sector, had just carried out the third U-turn in his career.

Last year he extracted a hefty pay rise for his members after a crippling strike, only to become a force of reason in the union movement. But his "Alliance for Jobs," a pact with employers and the government that proposed to freeze wages in exchange for a pledge to create more jobs, has been torn to shreds by Mr Kohl.

The Chancellor's own "Programme for Growth and Employment" seems designed to galvanise industry by cutting the cost of labour and making it easier to hire – and fire – workers.

As a result, Mr Zwickel and the other unions leaders are back on the warpath, threatening to unleash a wave of strikes in the summer.

"This savings package is not a programme for growth and employment. It is a programme of social heartlessness," said Dieter Schulte, head of the Trade Union Federation, in Berlin. "We will resist it as hard as we can," he pledged.

From his point of view, the omens do not look good. Economic uncertainty and the torrent of worsening employment statistics has beaten many workers into submission. That is the message coming from the Ruhr, Berlin, and even Bremen, where thousands lost their jobs yesterday as the country's largest shipbuilder, Bremer Vulkan, went into liquidation.

The Baltic port, where the unemployment rate will now rise above 20 per cent, was to have been the focus of resistance to the government. But Bremen's workers and freshly unemployed also stayed at home yesterday, evidently deciding that the unions were rattling their sabres in defence of a lost cause.

Europe loses shipbuilding to Asian yards

SARAH HELM
Brussels

This week has brought bleak ews for Europe's shipbuilding ndustry. As Japan and South Korea continue to increase heir share of the world market, hree major European yards ave gone under in two days.

On Monday, Copenhagen's ast shipbuilder, Burmeister nd Wain, announced that it had iven up the fight to stave off ankruptcy and would close its 53-year-old yard on the capital's Refshale Island.

Then, the death knell was ounded over two other shipards. Bremer Vulkan, Germany's largest shipbuilder, pened bankruptcy proceedings yesterday. In Poland, the eadline for new investors to ave Gdansk shipyard, the ainspring of the Solidarity novement in the 1980s, ran out n Tuesday.

Many European shipbuilders re being out-classed in the global race for trade. Cheaper rices, due to low labour costs and state subsidies, are attracting buyers to the East. The market leader is Japan, with 41 er cent of the market in 1994, compared with 37 per cent in 976. South Korea has 16.7 per ent of market share compared vith only 1.6 per cent in 1976, nd China has 3.8 per cent.

The European Union had 20 er cent of the market in 1994, ompared with 26.8 per cent in 976. Germany is Europe's industry leader with 7.6 per cent f the world market, while ritain, which had 4.5 per cent f the market in 1976, saw a fall 1.1 per cent in 1994.

While the EU's overall loss of arket share may look undramatic, the loss of jobs during the ame period gives a more worying picture. In 1994, 120,000 eople were employed in shipuilding in the EU, compared ith 219,000 in 1976.

Cheaper labour costs have eant buyers now look to sian shipbuilders for vessels ch as super-tankers, which are labour intensive and demand a lower level of skill to construct. European yards now build more sophisticated vessels, with many concentrating on roll-on roll-off ferries, ice breakers and cruise vessels. Poland has maintained 3.2 per cent of the world market. A would-be member of the EU, it is ditching debt-ridden companies but has re-structured where it can.

Even with restructuring, Europe has seen a slump in jobs. Bremer Vulkan had 23,000 workers last year. Most of the 1,400 people employed at the Copenhagen yard have already been laid off, and the closure of Gdansk could lead to the loss of 7,000 jobs.

A paper on Europe's maritime future, published by the European Commission in March, warned that the loss of jobs meant Europe was "running out of properly trained and qualified seafarers". Furthermore, said the paper, "As a result, opportunities are being lost and the future of Europe's maritime industries and services is being jeopardised, and the high quality of European shipping compromised."

The longer term outlook is not all bad. The Commission is backing efforts to develop new high-tech shipbuilding methods which can cut down a ship's design and building time, and could put the Europeans back in business. The battle to abolish state subsidies in the industry is already joined. And as standards for shipping – particularly passenger shipping – are increased, buyers might once again favour quality vessels produced in European yards.

Orders for goods shipping has remained fairly constant in recent years. A large proportion of the world fleet is reaching the end of its life, and orders are expected to increase as ships are re-fitted or replaced.

Nevertheless, EC analysts predict that, with the relentless drive for productivity, the loss of jobs in EU shipbuilding will continue to decline.

Thousands flee fighting as Liberian warlords close in for the kill

Grief stricken: A woman in Monrovia is carried away by friends after fainting when her son was shot dead Photograph: AP

NYENATI ALLISON
Associated Press

Monrovia — Peacekeeping troops blocked bridges leading into the war-torn city yesterday to prevent more gunmen from entering, but factional fighting raged for a third day and spread toward the neighbourhood of two government leaders.

Thousands of civilians began fleeing as fighting entered the Paynesville area and inched toward adjacent Congo Town, home to warlords Charles Taylor and Alhaji Kromah. The fighting was particularly heavy in Paynesville, which has long been controlled by Taylor's National Patriotic Front faction.

Fighting was also reported near the Barclay army barracks, and there was sporadic shooting in the Mamba Point diplomatic section, where US Marines shot to death three Liberians who fired towards the compound on Tuesday.

The fighting in Paynesville indicated that the warlord Roosevelt Johnson's supporters were launching an assault aimed at Taylor and Kromah. The two men were rivals during Liberia's six-year civil war, but have since joined forces against Johnson.

obituaries / gazette

John Lorne Campbell

John Lorne Campbell of Canna was a Scottish patriot of unique stamp, a scholar of exceptional quality, and a generous friend to many both at home and beyond the shores of Scotland. His roots lay in the old heartland of the Scottish Kingdom, in Argyll, where his pedigree of the Campbells of Craignish and *Clann Thearlaich* bear witness to the single-mindedness and fierce independence of spirit which was Campbell's own mark.

The eldest son of Col Duncan Campbell of Inverneill on Loch Fyne and his American wife, Ethel Waterbury, of New Jersey, he was educated at Cargilfield School, Edinburgh, and Rugby. He went on to St John's College, Oxford, to read Rural Economy under Professor Sir James Scott Watson and Celtic under Professor John Fraser of Jesus College, graduating in 1929 and receiving his MA in 1933.

An interest in Gaelic from boyhood was fostered by Fraser, the gamekeeper's son from Glenurquhart who became Campbell's mentor. Campbell began work while at Oxford on a Gaelic anthology which became his first publication, *Highland Songs of the Forty-Five*, in 1933. He always averred that Fraser had taught him the principles and discipline of editing which subsequently served him in such good stead and naturally made him impatient of carelessness and low standards in such fields of scholarship.

The editorial apparatus of this work put up an important scholarly marker and presented a thesis which Campbell followed through his long career. When *Highland Songs of the Forty-Five* was deservedly republished by the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society in 1984, beside making amendments and additions he was able to restate with conviction after half a century that:

> . . . the Rising of 1745 was the natural reaction of the Jacobite clans and their sympathisers in the Highlands against what had been since the coming of William of Orange in 1690 a calculated official genocidal campaign against the religion of many and the language of all Highlanders.

After Oxford, Campbell's career took a fresh and momentous turn. Invited to Barra to study crofting conditions and colloquial Gaelic, his arrival in the Outer Hebrides on 4 August 1933 marked the beginning of a long and extraordinary life's work of recovery and transmission of the Gaelic song, literary and linguistic record. Sharing in the coterie which Compton Mackenzie had established at Northbay in Barra, Campbell himself stayed with the exceptional John Macpherson, county councillor and postmaster, known to all as the "Coddy".

With him, and other Barra notables such as Neil Sinclair, the *Sgoilear Ruadh*, and Annie and Calum Johnston, he began to explore this unusual world of the Hebrides, then still, as in his own words, "like the old Highlands of the early 19th century". Here Campbell became the pioneer of the modern collection and preservation of Gaelic song and story. He worked outside the conventional institutional framework of the universities, which arguably has given his work a freshness of approach in the study of Gaelic literature and history.

With Compton Mackenzie, John Lorne Campbell took an interest in the political and economic life of the Outer Hebrides and together they founded the Sea League, which took its title from the 19th-century Land League and its philosophy and dynamic from the fishery policies of Norway, Iceland and the Faeroes. They called for the closure of the Minch to trawlers in order to safeguard the livelihoods of Hebrideans deriving from traditional drift-net and long-line fishery.

Campbell's own robust comment on the episode delivered in 1975 sums up some of his own convictions on Scottish political life:

> Personally I have never been more thoroughly convinced of the justice of any cause than I was of the Sea League. The situation was a revelation of the attitude of the Westminster government and the Scottish Office towards the Hebrides. The islands were despised because they were poor, and they were poor because their economic interest in the greatest source of wealth accessible to them, the sea, had been sacrificed to those of the English trawling monopolies.

When later he published Macpherson's *Tales of Barra, told by the Coddy* in 1960, he rationalised his approach to modern Celtic studies as "getting inside the tradition" and the need of the student (like himself) to learn, not the stilted language of the littérateurs and the grammarians, but a dialect of Gaelic, since "the dialects of the Outer Hebrides are more vigorous than the modern literary language, and contain many words and expressions that are not in the printed dictionaries". Over a period of about 30 years of perseverance and intense dedication, he amassed a sound recording archive of some 1,500 Gaelic songs and 350 folktales. Approximately one-tenth of the recordings have been published, for example the 135 waulking songs in three volumes of *Hebridean Folksongs* edited as a collaborative effort with Francis Collinson from 1966 until 1981.

Campbell was also a pioneer of technical methodology. His recording work advanced in step with contemporary developments; beginning with an Ediphone Recorder using wax cylinders, he progressed to a Presto Disc Recorder, both obtained in New York as state-of-the-art equipment. He would often recall ruefully the difficulties and suspicion which he met with in trying to get his equipment (which has achieved so much for our culture) through the bureaucracy of customs.

Latterly, when magnetic tape recorders became the norm, Campbell used a Grundig Tape Recorder and a Phillips Portable Recorder. Working alone in the field, he gained some recognition of the importance of his task with a two-year grant of £250 from the Leverhulme Foundation in 1949.

The linking of Scotland and Nova Scotia was another facet of Campbell's innovative approach to Gaelic studies. Having begun productive recording work in Barra and South Uist in 1936-37, he then visited eastern Canada and Cape Breton in particular to discover the Gaelic oral tradition among the descendants of 18th- and 19th-century emigrants very much alive even after a separation of over 100 years. Single-minded, but never narrow, he also recorded the history and traditions of the Micmac Indians, the aboriginal inhabitants of the Maritime Provinces, while he was in Nova Scotia. The significance of Cape Breton for Gaelic tradition was, in his own words, as "a Highland community where there are no lairds" and its richness is reflected in his own recently published *Songs Remembered in Exile* (1990).

Wishing to play a more active part in Hebridean affairs, John Lorne Campbell adopted the persona of laird and farmer when he bought the islands of Canna and Sanday in 1938, midway in the Minch between the mountainous seaboard to the east and the Outer Hebrides of the Uists and Barra to the west. He would observe that, on a very clear day, the hills of Donegal can be seen from the highest point of the island. The spatial and temporal circle was complete, uniting the ancient culture province of medieval Scotland which so few have had the knowledge and imagination to grasp.

From the mid-1930s, Campbell was a tireless advocate of the need for public and academic recognition of the importance of the oral culture of the Scottish *Gaidhealtachd*. He was one of the main instigators of FIOS, the Folklore Institute of Scotland (and its President from 1947), whose main objective was to lobby for official recognition of the importance and value of the Gaelic oral tradition in Scotland and the urgent need for support in organising the recording of it by modern methods.

He himself developed the case for systematic collection of Gaelic folksong on a properly organised basis, preferably by the endowment of a body in Scotland similar to the Irish Folklore Commission. The efforts of the Folklore Institute of Scotland together with other interested parties led to the creation of the School of Scottish Studies at Edinburgh University in late 1951. In contributing to the founding of this new archive, he endowed it with copies of more than 300 of his own wire recordings of traditional song.

Campbell was the author of 16 books and a great many articles, but one or two of his research topics stand out for the continuing contribution to Celtic studies. Gaelic stories taken down from dictation and recorded on the Ediphone in South Uist and Barra between 1933 and 1938 were published privately in *Sia Sgialachdan* in 1939. This book drew the attention of the Irish Folklore Commission to the Hebrides and they sent Calum MacLean to carry out recording work on their behalf, an initiative which undoubtedly helped to prompt the subsequent establishment of the School of Scottish Studies.

Campbell traced the literary remains and lost Gaelic folklore collection of Fr Allan McDonald (1859-1905), parish priest of Daliburgh and Briskay, and much of this corpus has been published. His reappraisal of the work of Marjory Kennedy Fraser (1837-1930), author of *Songs of the Hebrides* which had "popularised" Gaelic folksong, continues to have ramifications for the understanding of traditional folksong.

No celebration of Campbell's life could omit his marriage of 60 years to Margaret Fay Shaw of Glen Shaw, Pennsylvania, whom he met in South Uist in 1934 where she was collecting traditional Gaelic songs. This rare partnership brought together her musical talents with his lexical skills, creating the treasure-house of their lives and work in Canna.

The Isle of Canna was presented by John Lorne Campbell to the National Trust for Scotland in 1981, together with his library, archives and sound recordings. This gift of his life's work to Scotland was a gesture of enormous magnanimity and it is to be hoped that an outcome can be devised to realise and reflect his vision.

Undoubtedly Canna with its wealth of resources could become a place of pilgrimage and a centre for advanced scholarly research in Celtic studies. Here we would be made aware of a reorientation of Scottish history from east coast, lowland, to west coast, Hebridean; and towards a baroque grandeur of Highland history where the source is not the product of a hostile Edinburgh and Westminster bureaucracy but an unrealised store ranging from the rich oral literature of an ancient people to distant European archives.

Hugh Cheape

John Lorne Campbell, Scottish Gaelic scholar: born Argyll 1 October 1906; FRSE 1989; OBE 1990; married 1935 Margaret Fay Shaw; died near Fiesole, Italy 25 April 1996.

'Getting inside the tradition': Campbell became the pioneer of the modern collection and preservation of Scottish Gaelic song and story Photograph: Tom Weir

David Kelsey

"Oh, no. Kels. I don't think so – a bit over the top." David Kelsey, actor, director, playwright and adaptor, had such a relish for the stage as a dramatic medium – such a feeling for the theatre theatrical – that it was almost instinctive for him to attempt a boldness of gesture, a roundness of delivery and a robustness of manner which by today's standards struck an altogether too actorly note.

Kelsey had the build, the voice, the presence and the personality: but in a theatrical era coming swiftly under the influence of television, the opportunities to strut and fret were diminishing nightly, and they came mainly in musicals.

It was in that old warhorse, *Robert and Elizabeth* (Lyric, 1964), written by Ron Grainer (tunes) and Ronald Millar (words), that Kelsey probably had his finest hour, or at least his most widely remembered, since he was to spend most of his career running various reps in the heyday of the subsidised post-war revival of the repertory movement.

He played Mr Macready, Kean's great rival, and some of us suspected that in the timing of the famous Macready pause Kelsey out-paused Macready himself. And why not? If one could not go over the top as Mr Macready in a West End musical as "emotional" as the

Kelsey: out-pausing Macready

Millar-Grainer hit about the secret passion of two great poets, Elizabeth Moulton-Barrett and Robert Browning, what was the theatre for?

In Wendy Toye's production Kelsey sensed that the atmosphere was ripe for ripeness. So he let rip. One night, however, the interpreter of the master of the stagy pause was himself given pause – indeed everybody was – when a spectator in the royal box at the Lyric interposed his own critical comment.

It came while Kelsey's Macready was questioning the quality of a play Browning had written. When Keith Michell's Browning insisted that it was "a good play" and Macready contradicted him, an American voice barked from the outer darkness: "It *is* a good play!"

Such unexpected support for the poet's dramaturgy created a distraction for several minutes since the spectator repeatedly contradicted Macready's criticism until a member of the stage staff went up to the playgoer, who promptly left.

Had Kelsey himself inadvertently incited the incident during the run of his previous West End show, a short-lived, intimate revue which satirised American values and attitudes? *Seven-Bob-A-Buck*, which had transferred from Hampstead to the Comedy, may have got the bird from the critics for the crudeness of its satire, but Kelsey had stolen a notice or two.

"Paying customers, if any, will find what pleasure they can in . . . the well-bred, languid embarrassments of David Kelsey," said one; and "David Kelsey strikes a succession of stage-English attitudes which are often very funny," wrote another.

Widely respected in the profession as a versatile and sympathetic character actor – ranging from Malvolio, Archie Rice and Sherlock Holmes to Trigorin in *The Seagull*, Professor Higgins in *My Fair Lady* and Crocker-Harris in *The Browning Version*, Kelsey also held posts as resident director at the Northcott, Exeter, the Theatre Royal, Plymouth, the Royal, Northampton, and the Marlowe, Canterbury, and helped to found a touring troupe, Baroque Theatre Company, which gave work to newly qualified actors and technicians.

No one understood better the value of the largely underrated reps, and Kelsey seems to have worked as actor or director at most of them, from Pitlochry to Plymouth, Bromley to Basingstoke, Manchester to Newbury. In a recent tour of *The Boy Friend* he played the redoubtable Percy and staged a tour of his own musical about Elsie and Doris Waters called *Gert 'n' Daisy*.

Other writings ranged from a stagy vehicle for the late – and some said great – Sonia Dresdel as a snarling elocutionist, *Game for Two or More Players* (Farnham, 1973) to an improbable funeral-parlour farce, *Now Here's a Funny Thing!* (Exeter, 1976); but if his pieces rarely struck gold they were never less than actable, especially for players unafraid to go "over the top".

Among more recent touring productions were revivals of the American musical *Barnum*, Priestley's *I Have Been Here Before*, and the pantomime *Cinderella* (King's, Edinburgh).

Adam Benedick

David Kelsey, actor, director and playwright: born 16 June 1932; died 4 April 1996.

Rafael Orozco

The Spanish pianist Rafael Orozco was one of the most strikingly original talents to emerge on the international concert scene in the Sixties.

His earliest musical influences were his father and his aunt, from whom he received his first piano lessons. He was born in Córdoba in 1946; at 13 he entered the Conservatorio Superior in Madrid, and on graduating was fortunate to find in the Bulgarian pianist Alexis Weissenberg, who was then living in Spain, an outstanding teacher and mentor. Concerts in Spain and prizes at competitions there and in Italy followed, but it was not until 1966 when, at the age of 20, he won first prize at the Leeds International Piano Competition, that the possibility of making a world-wide career presented itself, and the following decade saw him performing and recording extensively.

The years following a big break – as winning first prize at Leeds was in the Sixties – are full of pitfalls; new repertoire, particularly concertos, must be learnt quickly and then performed for the first time in the harsh critical light of the concert halls, then straight in to the recording studio where the results are compared favourably or otherwise with veterans and peers alike. It said much for Orozco's talent and dedication that he coped so superbly with these challenging fears. He always gave credit to Terry Harrison for managing his career so carefully at this time and to the Italian pianist and teacher Maria Curcio-Diamond for her unconditional support and outstanding musical advice. He appeared regularly with nearly all the major orchestras under conductors including Barenboim, Maazel, Muti, Previn, Chailly and Commissiona, but always singled out the many performances with Giulini in, amongst other places, London, Chicago, New York and Berlin, and at the Edinburgh Festival, as being of particular importance to him during these years.

Orozco had the most formidable command of the instrument, and on those occasions when everything fell into place the results were electrifying; the savage glitter of the Second Prokofiev Concerto suited him perfectly and he succeeded as few others in uncovering the musical and emotional polyphony of Rachmaninov's Third. This was pianism of great distinction and commitment; his seemingly limitless energy and steely-fingered articulation set him apart.

Orozco never really liked living in London, which was his base after winning Leeds, and in 1974 moved first to Paris then a few years later to Rome, where he settled in a beautiful apartment overlooking the Trevi fountain. He later felt that, although personally much happier, he had perhaps made the break with London too soon, and by the early Eighties, though still performing extensively, a quieter period in his professional life set in; though this may not have been by design, it finally gave him time to study and think more deeply about his playing, particularly of composers he had hitherto avoided – notably Schubert. The results were beautiful and the concerts and recordings from these last years form the high-point of his musical achievement. The international critical acclaim for the Schubert works (the posthumous B Flat Sonata and *Wanderer Fantasia*), Albéniz's *Iberia* and the complete piano music of Falla touched him and brought him great personal satisfaction.

Orozco: electrifying

It is these recordings together, perhaps, with the complete works for piano and orchestra of Rachmaninov, made earlier in his career, that will give future generations some idea of what made Rafael Orozco's playing special: pianistic refinement, colour, sensitivity to balance and pedalling, together with a remarkable ability to maintain control of a plethora of notes with elegance and what might seem like ease but was really the result of a very clear musical intelligence, concentration and hard work.

He was a delightful person – very Andalusian in both appearance and temperament – and a warm, generous and supportive colleague, as I personally experienced on many occasions. He listened to others with interest and perception, showing infectious joys and enthusiasm in front of good playing and a cool contempt for the second-rate and shabby that he felt was all too often offered to the public.

His final concerts were in Japan last November.

Peter Bithell

Rafael Orozco Flores, pianist: born Córdoba, Spain 24 January 1946; died Rome 24 April 1996.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

HARPER-DONNELLY: On 26 April, in Chicago, to Sarah and Peter, a daughter, Caroline Emma, a sister for Imogen and Giles.

DEATHS

EVANS: John H., born Haslingden 17/9/20, worked for NHS in Lancashire, Bath, Winchester and Dartford. Died suddenly at home in Sevenoaks on 23 April 1996. Missed by Cecilia, Paul, Ann-Marie, Kate, Josephine, Brynach and many others. Requiem mass at St Thomas of Canterbury, Sevenoaks, on 2 May 1996 at noon. Followed by interment beside his much-missed children Janet and Damian at St Mary's and Blessed John Southworth, Samlesbury, near Preston, on 3 May 1996 at 2pm. Donations to Cheshire Home at Chipstead, c/o Francis Chappell, 27 London Road, Sevenoaks.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron, Outward Bound Trust, and Gold Card Member, Variety Club of Great Britain, attends a Sport Award Lunch at the London Hilton, London W1. Princess Margaret attends the Royal Caledonian Ball at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London W1. Princess Alexandra, Vice-President, opens the new Headquarters of the Merseyside Branch of the British Red Cross Society at Bradbury House, Brunswick Business Park, Liverpool, and as Patron, Fairbridge, attends a Royal Gala Evening in the Town Hall, Liverpool.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. F Company Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am. Band provided by the Irish Guards.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr R. J. Bolton and Miss H. M. Thearle

The engagement is announced between Helen, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Brian Thearle, of Newport, Isle of Wight, and Richard, elder son of Mr and Mrs John Bolton, of Hadley Wood, Hertfordshire.

Birthdays

Maj-Gen David Alexander-Sinclair, 69; Dr Robert Anderson, Director, British Museum, 52; Air Chief Marshal Sir John Barraclough, 78; Mr Theodore Bikel, actor, 72; Professor Neil Buxton, Vice-Chancellor, University of Hertfordshire, 56; The Right Rev Bruce Cameron, Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney, 56; Sir Hugh Cortazzi, former diplomat, 72; Dr Ian Evans, Head Master, Bedford School, 48; Mr Alastair Forbes, journalist and writer, 78; Mr Jon Foulds, chairman, Halifax Building Society, 64; Mr Peter Foster, architect, 77; Sir Campbell Fraser, former chairman, Scottish Television, 73; Sir James Hamilton, former Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Department of Education and Science, 73; Dr Patrick Hillery, former President of the Irish Republic, 73; Professor Sir Robert Honeycombe, metallurgist, 75; Mr Engelbert Humperdinck, rock singer, 60; Mr Clive Jenkins, trade union leader, 70; Mr Michael Kaser, economist, and General Editor, International Economic Association, 70; Mr Brian Lara, cricketer, 27; Dr Malcolm Lipkin, composer, 64; Miss Peggy Mount, actress, 80; Mr John Neville, actor, 71; Air Marshal Sir Ian Pedder, 70; Mrs Dawn Primarolo MP, 42; Lord Silsoe QC, barrister, 66; Sir Ronald Sinclair, former judge, 93; Dame Nancy Snagge, former director, WRAF, 90; Dr Benjamin Spock, child care specialist, 93; Mr David Suchet, actor, 50; Mr Alan Titchmarsh, broadcaster, 47; Mr Jimmy White, snooker player, 34; Lord Woolf, a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, 63.

Anniversaries

Births: Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia, 1729; Sir Humphry Repton, landscape architect, 1752; John Galt, novelist, 1779; Jerome Klapka Jerome, writer, 1859; Baron Manfred von Richthofen, aviator, 1892; Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby, singer, 1904.
Deaths: Leonardo da Vinci, painter, sculptor and scientist, 1519; Louis-Charles Alfred de Musset, playwright, 1857; Nancy, Viscountess Astor, politician, 1964; John Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI, 1972; Sir Michael Murray Hordern, actor, 1995.
On this day: the Authorised Version (King James) of the Bible was published, 1611; in Germany, trade unions were banned, 1933; *Queen Elizabeth II* sailed from Southampton on her maiden voyage, 1969. Today is the Feast Day of St Athanasius, Saints Exsuperius or Hesperus and Zoë, St Mefalda, St Ultan of Fosses, St Waldebert and St Wiborada.

Lectures

National Gallery: Tom Parsons, "Spring Chickens (i): Veronese, *Christ addressing a Kneeling Woman*", 1pm.
National Portrait Gallery: Frances Homan, "James Gillray's Subverted Interiors", 1.10pm.
London School of Economics, London WC2: Professor Michael Walzer, "Regimes of Tolerance", 5.30pm.
Exeter University: Lord Alexander of Weedon QC, "Business, what is its role in society?", 6pm.
University College London, London WC1: Professor Maria Fitzgerald, "Painful Beginnings: studies in foetal and infant sensation", 5.30pm.
Royal Society of Literature, London W2: Jenny Uglow, "Fielding, Grub Street and Canary Wharf: some beginnings of literary journalism", 7pm.

Luncheons

Newspaper Society

The Prime Minister, Mr John Major MP, was the guest of honour and speaker at the AGM luncheon of the Newspaper Society held yesterday at the London Hilton, London W1. Mr Geoffrey Copeman, President of the Society, was the host.

Women of the North

Lady Elizabeth Cavendish and Mrs Edwina Curry MP attended the 31st Women of the North fund-raising luncheon held yesterday at the Imperial Hotel, Blackpool. Ms Linda Lee Potter and Ms Hazel Townson were the speakers.

Dinners

Gresham College

Sir Peter Middleton delivered the Gresham Special Lecture, "Banking Today" yesterday evening at Guildhall, London EC2, and was the guest of honour at a dinner given afterwards at Barnard's Inn Hall, London EC1, by Mr Francis Baden-Powell, Chairman of the Council of Gresham College.

Girls get MOUTHY

Girls are beating boys in exams. Young women have moved into former male preserves like the professions. Feminism has brought greater equality. But is it also leading more women to resort to physical violence? **Rebecca Fowler** reports

There is something uniquely shocking in the image of young women using physical violence against their own sex. We have come to expect violence from boys. We had better get used to more of it from girls.

Scant details have emerged of the events that led up to Louise Allen 13, lifeless, being rushed to hospital, reportedly after she was set upon by a group of girls "like a pack of animals" after she left a funfair close to her home in Corby, Northamptonshire, on Monday evening. Even in a violent age the news of her death was met with disbelief.

For the community who knew Louise, her death is being treated as a terrible and isolated tragedy that has shaken the Roman Catholic school where she was a popular pupil. But it is bound to fuel concern over the increasing evidence that young girls are more violent, often to one another, than women of older generations. Of course, it is a myth that girls are little angels. Traditionally, they controlled their patch of the playground with manipulation and verbal abuse, including spreading rumours and excluding members of a group. But, until recently, they had not resorted widely to physical violence.

The rise in violent female crime and the increase in reports of female bullying suggest that girls are using violence with almost as much enthusiasm as boys. Women's lives have been transformed by a growing sense of equality with men, yet it is as if the next generation of women are taking up some of the darkest aspects of male behaviour and making it part of their own response to their frustrations and fears.

In the past five years female violent crime has risen by 12 per cent, four times the rate among men, and offences involving women carrying out assault, robbery, murder and drug-related crimes has increased by 250 per cent since 1973. Although the numbers remain small, with 9,500 women found guilty of violence against another person in 1994 compared to 5,300 in 1984, a clear pattern is emerging: women are becoming more violent.

Most disturbing are the signs of increased violence among younger women who, at the most extreme level, are forming menacing American-style gangs on some inner-city housing estates. (Elizabeth Hurley, the actress and model was famously mugged by such a gang in London last year.) In a survey by Demos, the independent think-tank, it emerges that in the 15 to 17 age group, girls are more likely to take pleasure in violence than boys, suggesting that we may have a new generation of female aggressors in the making.

Among the most disturbing recent cases were two 17-year-old girls who carried out a vicious attack in 1992 on their 70-year-old neighbour, in which they strangled her with a dog chain; two women who tortured and burned a 16-year-old girl to death in Manchester; and a host of recent crimes in America, from where the trend of female gangs has already to started to catch on.

Kidscape, a child protection charity, has seen an increase in the number of calls from girls who are the victims of violent attacks by other girls. The charity received 80 reports of violence in 1993, which rose to 97 in 1994 and to 119 in 1995, varying from kicking and pushing to one group attack in which a girl was pinned down in the showers by classmates who pushed a bar of soap into her anus.

Michel Elliott, director of Kidscape, says young women are getting a confusing message: "A lot of girls think that to be emancipated one acts like a boy. There is a whole genre of films in which the heroine is violent," she says. "Combined with that, we don't explain the consequences of violence to girls in the same way that we do to boys, because we don't think we need to. They see someone get kicked in a film and get up. They don't understand the consequences."

> Though women are becoming more violent, there is not yet a culture of violence like that which thrives among boys

The cultural backdrop in which women are portrayed as more assertive, and more aggressive, began to change most notably in the early Nineties. The film *Thelma and Louise*, in which two friends reap a trail of revenge against violent and oppressive men, appealed to an older generation of women who have fought for a hard-won sense of equality. Ms Elliott is among those who believe it conveys ambiguous messages to younger girls: "There is a tremendous role confusion for girls, but look at the role models we are giving them. We've gone from Doris Day to Drew Barrymore with a gun in *Bad Girls*. This is women trying to be more like men, but instead of taking the best traits, like assertiveness, they've gone for the worst: violence."

Women have always been portrayed as talented practitioners of evil, but it is as if Lady Macbeth has finally taken up the dagger herself. *Thelma and Louise* was followed by a host of films with subversive, violent heroines including *Basic Instinct*, *The Last Seduction* and *Single White Female*. More recently, *Heavenly Creatures* and *Tank Girl* both portrayed younger women who seized their independence through violence.

The 2,000-strong Demos survey of 18 to 34-year-olds made it clear that women had become more assertive. They are just as likely to travel, rock-climb and bungee-jump as men. There are now more female solicitors under 30 than male, and gradually women are ascending to the top positions in their professions. Women have also won the basic right to equal opportunities in work and education, something that was unheard of half a century ago.

But for a generation of women who have inherited the fruits of feminism there is a risk of also taking on the most negative aspects of a society once controlled exclusively by men. Heart disease and alcoholism are rising in women, female harassment against men is also on the increase, and the early evidence suggests the connection between violence and poverty is as strong in women as it is in men.

Nick Winkfield, a partner in MORI, the opinion polling organisation, which conducted the research for Demos, says: "Women in the lower social groups are much more tolerant of violence and more willing to use force to get what they want, compared to well-off women."

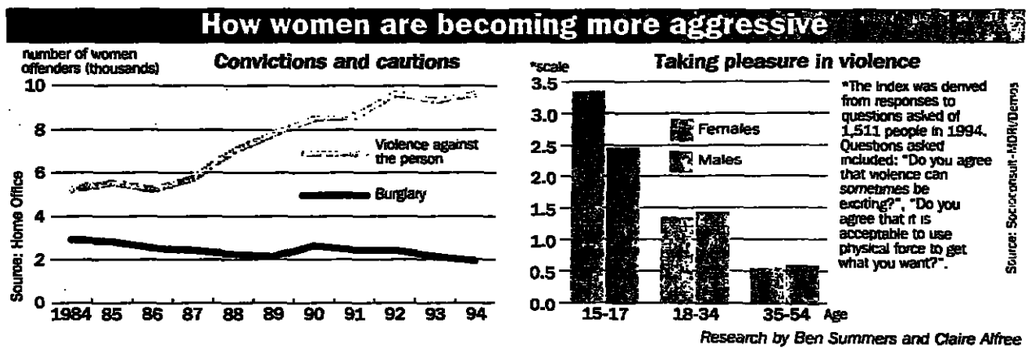
Women who have committed atrocious and notorious crimes, from Myra Hindley to Rosemary West, have been dismissed as so far beyond the pale that it is impossible to draw conclusions from their actions. But the steady increase in violent crimes among women, especially those in their teens, is forcing a reassessment of the relationship between women, violence and power.

Those who work with children believe that the most significant factor in the rise in female crime is the exposure of all young people to violence. Peter Wilson, director of *Young Minds*, which campaigns for children's mental well-being explained: "Women may have become more assertive, but across the genders violence is often the response to a violent upbringing, combined with the fact that children are now exposed to a host of violent images on television."

Despite the increase in female violence, it is significant that girls are still reluctant to be known to be violent. Research at Sheffield University into bullying among 7,000 children suggests that girls are just as likely to use physical violence when they are bullied as boys, but they are ashamed to admit to it. Although women are becoming more violent, there is not yet the equivalent of the macho culture of violence which thrives among boys. That reluctance to boast about violence may offer some hope of containing the rise in female aggression. But the statistics suggest that female violence may well be here to stay – in which case the playground is set to become an even more frightening place than it already is.

Bitter fruit? American gang violence has influenced girl gangs in Britain — Photograph: Nancy Siesel/Katz

How women are becoming more aggressive



Research by Ben Summers and Claire Alfree

DIARY

So, what's new, poltergeist?

Should you ever be so unlucky as to fall prey to a poltergeist, rest assured on one score. Even in the shady world of the paranormal good taste still prevails.

***The Phantom of the Opera on Ice*, the glitzy musical production currently touring the country on skates, has, I hear, been plagued by a mysterious curse – the phantom of *The Phantom*. Just before the opening night last November, the generator broke down and musical equipment was stolen. The curse struck again in Southsea, when the refrigeration inexplicably packed up – no minor snag for a production staged entirely on ice. Most recently, the poor, beleaguered production manager's new bicycle was stolen.**

When the show reached the capital last weekend, staff steeled themselves for the ghoul's next move. Sure enough, the night before the show was due to open, two huge trucks of equipment were broken into – and the special nuts and bolts needed to build the rink spirited away. Catastrophe! Emergency replacements flown from Glasgow saved the day – but one mystery remained.

Why were all the cassettes of the musical's music, also stashed in the truck, not taken? There can be only one answer. Phantom's composer is one Roberto Danova – a man responsible for writing hits for, among others, Engelbert Humperdinck and Tom Jones (above). Evidently, even poltergeists have some musical standards.

Life is sweet and sour for Mike Leigh

Even eminent film makers can be too authentic for their own good, I am afraid. So the director Mike Leigh has discovered, to his cost, while making his latest movie. The film, a student saga set in the 1980s, is currently being shot in Camden, north London. Most of the action takes place in a flat above a Chinese restaurant. All well and good, so far, but it seems that Leigh, a stickler for realism, had taken it a step too far.

The Chinese restaurant set, with its impeccably researched Eighties prices on display, has proved irresistible to the good folk of Camden. Passers-by, spotting the uncommonly cheap eatery, could scarcely believe their eyes – or their luck. Word quickly spread, and enraged rival local Chinese restaurateurs soon complained about unfair competition – and reported the illegal business to the council. In turn, Camden fired off a letter berating the owner of the premises for not having a licence. Stand by for Leigh's next supremely well researched movie – about warring inner-city Triad gangs and uppity council officials.

A little Highland bull for the digestion

Loyal readers of *Farming News* will doubtless have spotted a subtle change in the weekly's ad campaign. The picture may be the same old snag – but the old slogan has been hoofed out. "When the BSE scare broke," explains the publisher, Alan Whibley, "our first thought was to drop our long running advertising campaign, for fear it would offend readers." It is not terribly hard to see why – for across the shot of the Highland bull ran the unfortunate slogan: "No bull". A less sensitive suggestion in such troubled times would be hard to imagine.

But how much worse it would have been if *Farming News* had scrapped the bull! No self-respecting farmers' rag could possibly be seen to cull its own cattle – let alone a Highland bull which is typically reared on grass, with a low exposure to BSE. The Highland bull is "a safe animal, from a safe breed, destined for premature slaughter and destruction", stresses Mr Whibley, cooing with renewed confidence. "No wonder he's livid. So is his owner. So are countless thousands of other owners. So," Mr Whibley winds up with a well timed flourish, "am I."

Inspirational India

The late entries of Mohamed al-Fayed (below) and Sir James Goldsmith into Britain's party political race have set all kinds of alarm bells ringing in high places. Are eccentric billionaire businessmen going to hijack our great democracy, in another sorry step down the road to US-style elections?

Nonsense! We should, Eagle Eye believes, take heart from such goings on – and hope, one day, that they will bring us the kind of electoral choice enjoyed by the lucky citizens of India. The subcontinent's current polls feature, among others, a eunuch promising better living conditions for India's third sex, a low-caste sweeper standing on a platform for bringing back opium cultivation, and a Hare Krishna holy man who will, if successful, throw out all politicians over the age of 45. If we had choices like that in Britain, the polling booths for the local elections would, for once, be really busy.

Either way, they win

The Office of Fair Trading, the department charged with ensuring fair play for the consumer, clearly takes its role very seriously. Indeed, in a drive to maintain the highest standards of balance, it has recalled one Mark Kram to the press office after his two-year sojourn in another department. What better spokesperson for fairness than a man whose very name can be read both ways? Could it even be that his palindromic qualities were the key to his reappointment? True to form, Mr Kram declined to respond until he'd checked the proper direction, so to speak, of his reply. Then came a splendidly balanced pronouncement: "My appointment shows the even-handedness of the office."

Eagle Eye

THE INDEPENDENT
FOUNDED 1986
ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON E14 5DL
TELEPHONE 0171-293 2000/0171-345 2000 FAX 0171-293 2435/0171-345 2435
EDITOR: Charles Wilson
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Charles Leadbeater MANAGING EDITOR: Colin Hughes
SECTION TWO EDITOR: Simon Kelner · EXECUTIVE NEWS EDITOR: Michael Williams · NIGHT EDITOR: Richard Holledge
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When Britain fights for Europe

Two chapters in British military history are coming to their close. The Royal Navy is planning to enter a formal, if limited, partnership with the French Navy, ending at least two centuries of maritime rivalry. The RAF, it was announced yesterday, will close down in 2002 its final base in Germany, ending a presence unbroken since the Second World War.

The two events are, in one sense, quite distinct, in another sense, connected through an intriguing web of developments in European security policy. Almost unnoticed in the vacuous, Euro-baiting atmosphere in Westminster, Britain has been playing a bashfully positive European role in defence.

There are three arguments for change. Everyone agrees on the need to revise political structures, doctrines and deployments designed to face a full-frontal threat from the Soviet Union that no longer exists. Everyone, or almost everyone, agrees on the need to respond to the new security challenges of a more muddled, but still dangerous world. The new challenges will largely consist of fire-fighting and peace-keeping in small regional conflicts. They demand a modern, flexible military, capable of rapid deployment and – crucially – close co-operation with political allies, platoon by platoon and ship by ship.

Finally, most European governments – yes, even Britain – agree on the need to develop a specifically European security capacity, complimentary to Nato, not in competition with it. The failings of Europe's response in Bosnia make the case. There may once again be circumstances in which European governments feel the need to commit troops but the United States does not.

A hugely important development has been the French decision to re-consider its 30-year alienation from the military wing of Nato. President Chirac has admitted, in effect, that years of French attempts to build a European defence policy, in rivalry to Nato, have failed. The new French approach is to push for the creation of a European defence arm within Nato, based on the hitherto marginal Western European Union. The suggestion, to be discussed again by European defence ministers in Birmingham next week, is that the WEU should be "separable but not separate" from Nato. In other words, it should have the logistical, communications and transport assets needed to send European forces to a trouble zone, with the US blessing, but without US involvement. Britain generally supports this policy. So, with some reservations, does the US.

France wants to go further by giving overall control of WEU policies to EU summits. Britain vehemently opposes EU involvement in military matters.

Nonetheless – quite against the popular view of Anglo-French relations – the two principal military powers on the Continent see eye to eye on most security matters these days. A Franco-British Air Group, with a small headquarters in Buckinghamshire, has been created to run joint airlifts to trouble spots. The proposed Franco-British naval agreement will provide for something similar: formalising procedures for command and control of joint maritime operations in support of trouble-shooting or peacekeeping.

All of this may seem a far bugle call from Michael Portillo's stirring speech to the Conservative Party conference in Blackpool last year in which he said Britain would never belong to a European army under an EU defence policy. His speech ignored the facts, and grossly misrepresented the spirit, of what Britain is doing in the real world. Mr Portillo has been defence secretary for 10 months: fortunately, the Government's pursuit of a more European defence policy appears to have carried on regardless.

Britain tends to stress the bi-lateral, pragmatic nature of what is going on. France sees it as a step towards a European defence identity. No matter. The result will be the same and entirely laudable: to equip Europe with the military capacity to defend shared European foreign policy goals. There is a wider lesson here: the "pragmatic" and "visionary" versions of Europe's future are not necessarily at odds with each other. The Government should make more of these half-hidden European credentials, both at home and abroad. Its actions show that as far as defence is concerned at least Europe provides a more affordable and effective way to address modern security issues.

Computer scams

A laptop in every satchel, a Net link for every classroom, and a few hundred thousand cut-price PCs thrown in for good measure: Britain's politicians were falling over themselves at yesterday's Curriculum 2000 conference to describe their visions of a high-tech future for Britain's schools.

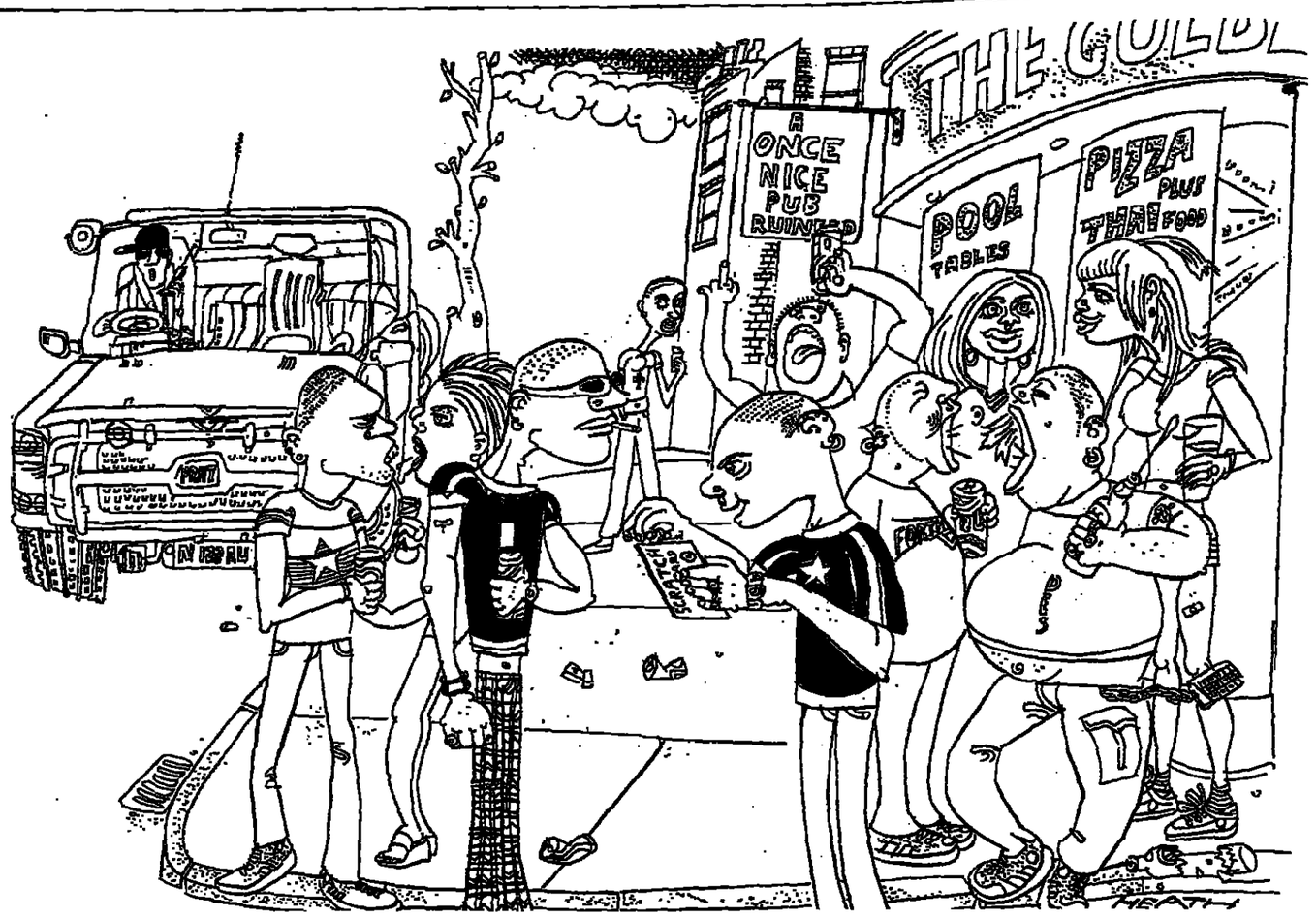
According to research released yesterday by Olivetti, one in three British households own computers – a higher proportion than in France, Germany or the US. One of the aims of the "computers in schools" movement is to make sure the other two-thirds are not excluded from the age of the Internet as well. The politicians' aims may be admirable: it is the means they propose to achieve them that are suspect.

Tony Blair wants every child to have access to a laptop computer. The Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine is considering a discount deal for 250,000 more PCs in schools. Mr Blair announced last autumn that BT would link schools to the Net for free. Mr Heseltine is rumoured to be considering an offer by Rupert Murdoch to provide schools with free satellite links to the Net as well.

They are right to encourage the private sector to provide computer facilities at a discount, or even for free. These companies will profit from their access to the consumers of the future, and their parents. But it would be a huge mistake, if the hidden cost of the "free" satellites on school roofs and cables under tennis courts is the expansion of monopoly power over the high-tech markets of the future. The other side to Mr Blair's "BT deal" was that Labour was prepared to make it easier for BT to dominate the telecommunications market. Since then he has had to tone down the anti-competitive nature of the proposals.

Mr Heseltine seems to have learnt no such lesson. Only weeks after he and Murdoch reportedly met for lunch this spring, the Government proposed an amendment to the Broadcasting Bill that will allow Murdoch's News Corporation even more power in the media market. Could this be the price of those free satellites?

Both parties are searching for high-tech policies for schools that don't squeeze the taxpayer. But by the time BT and Murdoch get their acts together, the cable television companies may already have connected the schools of the nation to the Net, without any incentive from government at all.



'I've won! I can now finance my own political party'

· LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ·

The masterpieces at Kenwood need full-time curation

Sir: I am not a member of the Council of the Friends of Kenwood and so cannot comment on the reported embargo on contacts between English Heritage and the Friends (report, 29 April). As the person who proposed the motion at the Friends AGM relating to the absence of a full-time curator, however, I can try to clarify the situation.

The preamble to the motion stated that the Friends have the highest opinion of the abilities and devotion of the curators and all the staff associated with Kenwood, and many of English Heritage's achievements at Kenwood to date. This remains the case.

The discussion has, however, become too focused on personalities. The principal point at issue is the downgrading of the role of expertise and scholarship in the running of Kenwood. That English Heritage feels that a collection containing masterpieces by Rembrandt and Vermeer, Frans Hals and Cuyp can be left without a full-time curator but not a full-time administrator/fund-raiser speaks volumes for that organisation's values.

Until recently scholar-administrators have been in charge of the house. Their activities have been informed by a deep understanding of Kenwood and its broader cultural context as well as by familiarity with administration, financial accountability and the wishes of the public. These attributes have enhanced the quality of Kenwood and, through special exhibitions, its wider contribution to society. The lack of the scholarly dimension on the part of professional administrators who are now in charge entails the risk that the building and its collections could lose their distinctive *raisons-d'être* as a result of the over-narrow application of administrative and financial principles.

It is because the present situation in Kenwood endangers both the expertise and authority of the curators and the character of the house and its collections that the Friends, led by George Levy, have expressed their deep concern and foreboding to English Heritage. I cannot believe that English Heritage can really have "talked to [the Friends] about the issues" if none of their representatives attended the Friends' council meeting.

PETER BARBER
London N8

Sir: It is with concern and regret that I read of the row over the management of Kenwood (report, 29 April).

I have visited it on and off for many years, taking visitors from both England and abroad. The staff invariably create an atmosphere of caring, courtesy and interest towards both the exhibits and the visitors that is rare, indeed almost unique, today. In addition, the beautiful grounds and the spacious kitchens and domestic quarters now successfully turned into a friendly and not too expensive place to eat, seem to reflect the care and concern which its builder, Judge Murray, showed in his judgements even "to a slave".

It would be tragic if these qualities were to be eroded by an impersonal administration and by the sort of cuts we are witnessing daily among the caring institutions we were once so proud of.

MRS JULIAN HARVEY
London SW1

Lib Dem call to Fayed

Sir: I hope that it is incorrect that Mohamed al-Fayed is planning to form his own Reform Party (report, 1 May) because I would regard such a step as politically foolish.

You describe him as being in favour of a Bill of Rights, a Freedom of Information Act, an elected second chamber and devolution for Scotland and Wales. Since those are all long-standing policies advocated by the Liberal Democrats, I would hope that he would support the Liberal Democrats rather than follow the ludicrous example of Sir James Goldsmith.

Lord LESTER QC
House of Lords
London SW1

Housing rights for gay couples

Sir: The Government's determination to oppose Glenda Jackson's amendment to the Housing Bill, which would have given cohabiting same-sex partners a legal right to succession of a tenancy, merely illustrates ministers' steadfast refusal to concede equal legal rights to homosexual couples ("Late deal saves housing bill", 1 May).

The Government must surely know that no form of "guidance" to local authorities can possibly take the place of legal protection for bereaved individuals, who, in the absence of a joint tenancy, will continue to live in fear of eviction in the wake of their partner's death.

One hopes that Michael Brown and Edwina Currie – the two ostensibly "pro-gay" Tory MPs who were seduced by the argument for guidelines instead of legislation on this issue, thus ensuring the amendment's defeat – will now do some serious soul-searching. Come the general election, gay and lesbian voters may wish to punish their complacency.

JOHN JACKSON
London SW16

Tradition of painted houses enriches our towns

Sir: I'm sorry that Colin Campbell (Letters, 30 April) thinks the lilac-painted house is a sad case. While understanding the attraction of clean stone houses it is a sad reflection on his taste simply to say that "you don't paint stone".

In the north-west of Cumbria, my home ground, it is the convention rather than the exception to paint stone houses. Towns like Wigton, Abbeytown and Aspatria are superb examples. There are many fine farm houses finished in fabulously imaginative colour combinations which speak volumes for the cultured taste of their owners. Wonderful sandstone houses, many of them 300 years old, painted in a wide range of colours, lilac included, not to mention pink, rich blues and every variation of cream and brown imaginable greatly enrich the quality of the town and rural scene.

This is a tradition started long before living memory records and certain to be maintained. I am profoundly grateful for it.

Our Norman forebears, the great masters of stone, were lavish painters of their cathedrals, outside as well as in. It was duller minds of perhaps more parsimonious times who stopped painting. How much more attractive would some of our great cities have been if their stone had been painted and not soot-ingrained black? If so, perhaps then they might have survived the post-war destruction. That really was a matter to be sad about.

MIKE BELL
Leeds

Check up on child carers

Sir: Before we were allowed to become foster carers, my husband and I were interviewed several times by a trained social worker. Every aspect of our married life was discussed, our children were interviewed in private, and all the members of our families were checked by the police.

I was horrified, therefore, to read the articles (from 20 April) detailing the dreadful experiences of children in homes who were subjected to terrible abuse by paedophiles. If everyone who works with children were interviewed and checked as we were, then our children's homes would be safer places.

ANNE E. MARTIN
Haywards Heath, Sussex

US terrorism

Sir: I see that the US has restated its list of nations that are supposed to be guilty of "state-supported terrorism": Cuba, North Korea, Sudan, Libya, Iraq, Iran, and Syria.

Many of us were taught that modesty is a virtue but I really do think the US should not be so modest as to leave itself off the list.

JOHN GITTINS
Cambridge

The writer is Professor Emeritus of the University of Toronto, Canada

Irresponsible analysis of a murderer

Sir: Dr Park Dietz, speaking for the FBI, has suggested that the individual who went berserk in Tasmania may have been influenced by media coverage of the Dunblane tragedy (report, 30 April). If he has been accurately reported, then it is alarming that a man so placed and likely to be heeded should irresponsibly give voice to such a banal view.

This kind of murderer does not invent himself as the result of a TV programme or newspaper report, nor do his actions issue from an intellectual decision to emulate those of somebody else. They are the final eruption of a long process of disintegration which has been silently festering for years and is incapable of being either promoted or prevented by the intervention of the media.

To imagine that such a man can make up his mind to copy a murderer and so become one too is the sort of opinion one may expect to hear in the pub. Unfortunately one increasingly hears it from people like Dr Dietz, who should know better, but whose level of analysis is often not much deeper.

BRIAN MASTERS
London W14

Happy at home

Sir: Why is there a constant assumption that a woman who chooses to stay at home should be an object of derision and pity? ("Is the housewife all washed up", 30 April).

I have been in the fortunate position to be able to choose to be a full-time mother since the birth of my two daughters, now aged nine and eight years old. I spend very little time worrying about our choice of soap powder. It only takes a few hours a week to keep our small house clean, which leaves me free to pursue my many interests which include art, creative embroidery, cultivating an allotment and serving as a school governor.

It is my working friends, overworked and stressed, who lose out – I have my freedom.

KATE BURBIDGE
New Malden, Surrey

Tottenham's rights issue

Sir: As financial adviser and underwriter to Tottenham Hotspur's recent rights issue, I write regarding "Tottenham wastes some money" (26 April).

Your article seems to suggest that non-underwritten deep discount issues occur on a daily basis and that the Tottenham issue is a departure from normal practice. I would suggest that such issues occur rarely and, when they do, are often associated with troubled corporates wrestling with financial difficulties – hardly a description which can be ascribed to the recent strong performance of our client.

The total costs of the transaction are £355,000, including total underwriting commission of £154,000, representing 3.2 per cent of the gross proceeds of the issue. If you have any suggestions as to where Tottenham could have gone to guarantee raising £11m at a cheaper rate than that, Alan Sugar and I would be pleased to hear from you.

MICHAEL COBB
Director, Henry Ansbacher
London EC3

Growing demand for FE colleges

Sir: You cover only half the story "Finance crisis puts 50 colleges at closure risk" (30 April). The pressure on further education colleges to reduce costs is certainly very severe; in three years the Sheffield College has cut its unit costs by around 25 per cent in real terms.

But worse is the fact that the Government is refusing adequately to fund continued expansion in many colleges which have met their growth targets. Local demand for education and training is rising, the size of the school-leaver cohort is growing, and the economic imperative of improving educational provision for people in employment is accepted.

Yet the Sheffield College is poised to have to cut provision in some subject areas, to close sites, and to shed staff. This crisis is largely of the Government's making and emergency measures are now needed to avert it.

SEB SCHMOLLER
Secretary, Natfhe: the University and College Lecturers' Union
Sheffield

Strimmer peril

Sir: As the days grow longer and so does the grass, we ask everyone with a strimmer to handle it with great care. We hear too many stories about hedgehogs with legs slashed, faces scarred, or even blinded because their cosy nest beneath a bush had been attacked by a strimmer.

A H COLES
British Hedgehog Preservation Society
Knowbury, Shropshire

Gas escape

Sir: Advertisements on hoardings widely proclaim the number you should ring if you smell gas escaping, but as the chairman of British Gas leaves office today, which number should you ring if you smell Cedric Brown escaping?

NIGEL HARRIS
London E1

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk)
Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Trapped inside the wrong county

MILES KINGTON

The legal world has been thrown into a turmoil by the victory of a Staffordshire man in the European Court of Justice. All his life, Staffordshire man Ken Bartable has fought against being regarded as a Staffordshire man and demanded to be treated as, and described as, a Shropshire man. Finally, his plea has been vindicated. The European Court of Justice has decreed that he can live as, and be described as, a Shropshire man if he wants to.

"I never wanted to be a Staffordshire man," says 51-year-old Ken. "All right, so I was born there, and I've lived there all my life, and I've got a Staffordshire accent, and all my relatives are Staffs people, but I've never felt one of them. Don't get me wrong. I like Staffs people, and I respect them, and in many ways they lead a decent ordinary life, even if they have mucky back gardens, but I've always felt myself to be a Shropshire person inside. Not for me the dark, smoky towns of Staffordshire, the dull, flat landscape. Give me the rolling hills of Shropshire, with the mysterious border country redolent of the old Marcher barons, and the Welsh fastnesses beyond! I have the body of a Staffordshire man but inside I have the soul and the yearnings of a Salopian, and my spirit answers to the soul of Shropshire!"

Well, but is there so very much difference between Staffs and Salop?

"There speaks a man who knows not the territory," says Ken. "Would AE Housman have written 'A Staffordshire Lad'? I think not. And if he had written 'A Staffordshire Lad', would it have been the exquisite saga of loss and longing that *A Shropshire Lad* was? Not so, I think."

But surely Housman's series of poems entitled *A Shropshire Lad* are in fact a gloomy, doomy series of hopeless looks back to an imagined past? His poetic world is all about soldiers being hanged and poachers being hanged and girls being jilted and love going sour and that sort of thing, isn't it? At least "A Staffordshire Lad" might have been a bit more cheerful. At least Arnold Bennett, who was a genuine Staffordshire lad, did write invigoratingly about the Five Towns even if he took the first opportunity to move to London and never come back?

"Ah, yes, the mysterious and redolent countryside of Shropshire!" says Ken Bartable, oblivious to anything else. "Shrewsbury, that half-Welsh, half-English fortress, where the Severn winds itself around the hilly town as if to protect it. A county of mysterious names like Wem and Ruyton-Eleven-Towns. A county dotted in the north with the lakes they call meres, and in the south with grand features like Wenlock Edge and the Long Mynd! There is my heart, not here in the stuffy suburbs of Stoke-on-Trent! And now at last I have won from the European Court of Justice the right to call myself a Shropshireman."

Yes, but have there ever really been times when he has been hurt or degraded, fired or made redundant, because he has been officially described as a Staffordshire man?

"Not as such," he admits, "but when I see myself described in the paper as a Staffordshire man, it hurts me. It distresses me. It sullies me. It makes me feel used. Take this headline here: 'Staffordshire man Ken Bartable in pub brawl knocks out two, puts three more in hospital'. Well, I find that demeaning. Why can't they just say, 'Would-be Shropshire man Ken Bartable Goes Berserk' or 'Ken "Call-me-Salopian" Bartable wrecks pub'? Is that too much to ask?"

Gosh. Did he, in fact, wreck a pub?

"Yes."

Why?

"Because some bastard called me a Staffordshire nerd. I demanded that he apologise and call me a Shropshire nerd, but he wouldn't."

Already other cases are lining up for the Court of Justice. There is a man who lives in Newcastle but feels he has the soul of a Manchester United supporter, and wants legally to be registered as one. There is a man who has the soul of an accountant even though he dances at Covent Garden Opera House, and wants to be reclassified as an accountant. And now, thanks to Ken Bartable, they may win their cases.

Any last thoughts from newly accredited Shropshire man Bartable?

"Yes. Thank God I'm not Welsh at least."

acceptance and surgery.

"It was like coming home," she said. "When I realised that

behaviour of the school directors breached the 1976 Euro-

that the Government would have to amend legislation.

birth certificates and passports.

A cure for Northern Ireland's paralysis

Disputes over handing in weapons must not be allowed to halt peace talks, argues **Dick Spring**

It is intolerable that the threat of terrorism should hang over people in any part of these islands. Our security forces maintain the closest co-operation to prevent such violence, to bring those responsible to justice, and to track down illegal weapons. Those who seek to use violence for political ends must meet the most effective security response we can muster.

Beyond that, we must also come to grips politically with the situation that has produced and sustained a culture which motivates people to kill and be killed, because of problems that the overwhelming majority of people believe can only be resolved politically.

The prospects for success of the negotiations on 10 June will be immeasurably enhanced if they take place in a climate of peace and are therefore inclusive. The two governments have signalled their desire that Sinn Fein should take its place at the negotiating table, on the one critical condition that the IRA ceasefire is unequivocally restored. The governments will expect all participants, at the beginning of the negotiations, to make clear their total and absolute commitment to the stern test of the principles of democracy and non-violence set out in the reports of the international body chaired by Senator George Mitchell.

In order to build confidence in the negotiations, the two governments have further agreed that the international body's proposals on decommissioning must be addressed at the beginning of the discussions.

The Irish Government has the strongest possible motivation to see illegal arms on all sides decommissioned as soon as possible and removed forever from the political equation. But, as the Mitchell report confirmed, it is unrealistic to expect this goal to be achieved simply by making it a precondition for entry into the negotiations

How the decommissioning issue will be handled is now a key issue in the ongoing debate about whether the ceasefire can be restored. An absolutist position on decommissioning as a precondition for talks is simply self-defeating. Without a restoration of the ceasefire, the decommissioning issue inevitably becomes academic, since those whose co-operation is needed to advance it will not be at the table. It has long been clear to everyone that non-inclusive talks against a background of violence were always going to be much less promising for achieving peace than inclusive negotiations against a background of peace.

Expertise in the deadly use of ordinary materials and an accessible black market in weaponry mean that decommissioning is not a decisive factor in preventing future violence. That requires, as the Mitchell report reminded us, that we must decommission mindsets as well. That is why the goal of meaningful and inclusive political negotiations is so crucial. A political dynamic is the enabling condition for progress on all fronts, including decommissioning.

The baleful capacity of the decommissioning issue to paralyse the wider political debate has been amply demonstrated. Clarity about a sensible way to handle it, and one that meets valid concerns on both sides, is the single most important contribution that the governments can make to building confidence and restoring optimism to the peace process generally.

Our treatment of this issue is manifestly central to the success or failure of the process as a whole. For that reason I proposed that we should as of now seek agreement on all sides that the negotiations should remit this issue in the first instance, under independent outside aegis, to a separate but parallel stream of negotiations. This would not in any way remove it from the overall agenda of the negotiators. They would receive reports on it periodically and its outcomes would be submitted to them in good time for full consideration alongside the results emerging from political negotiations across the three strands. The final judgement would be theirs, but taken on an informed basis, and after the necessary preliminary and technical issues had been sorted out.

My proposal would ensure that the question of decommissioning and the proposals of the Mitchell report would be fully addressed from the outset of substantive negotiations in tandem with political discussions across the three strands.

In my view, progress towards an inclusive settlement and decommissioning are likely to be achieved in parallel or not at all.

The Irish government, for its part, will be prepared to process urgently whatever legislation is needed to facilitate any arrangements that might be necessary for the physical decommissioning of weapons.

In my view, the creation of a separate fourth stream to the all-party negotiations, which would enable work on decommissioning to proceed in parallel with negotiations on a lasting political settlement, is the most likely strategy by which fear of the bomb can be forever removed from the life of all our peoples.

We must not allow a theoretical notion of the best to become an enemy of an achievable version of the good. An approach such as I have suggested is the most practical way to realise the goal both governments seek.

The writer is Deputy Prime Minister of the Irish Republic.

Let's all beam up to Heaven

Don't suppress Scientology. Its beliefs are a sufficient turn-off, says **Andrew Brown**

The Independent Television Commission has lifted its ban on advertising from the Church of Scientology, under pressure from a judicial review of its ban. This ought to be an occasion for large reflections about balancing freedom of speech with the need to protect the larval minds of Superchannel viewers against the drivel that Scientologists peddle. But it is hard to rise to this opportunity for noble thought when one considers the contestants closely.

If an atheist had set out to invent a religion that would discredit other religions, in my view the result would be very close to Scientology. On the other hand, if the same atheist had set out to make religious advertising completely pointless, even when possible, the result would be very like the ITC's code of practice.

The code prohibits advertisers from "expounding religious doctrine". They must not appeal for funds. They may not claim to be the only or true faith. They may not promote faith healing or miracle working; and, as if this ban on benefits in the present life were not enough, religions are also forbidden to suggest that their practice might have any benefits after death either: "References to the alleged consequences of not being religious or not subscribing to a particular faith are not acceptable."

Religion, then, may be advertised providing it has no doctrine, no noticeable consequences, and does not pretend to be true. It is fairly clear where the makers of all those Silk Cut advertisements honed their skills.

Despite fulfilling all these considerations, the original Scientology advertisement managed to fall foul of another clause in the code: section five says that "no advertising is acceptable from bodies ... whose rites or other forms of collective observance are not normally directly accessible to the general public."

The Commission, however, has reconsidered and has now established that the weddings, naming ceremonies, and similar events held by Scientologists are publicly accessible, so they will be allowed to advertise again.

Yet, though the ceremonies of the Scientologists are publicly accessible, only a small portion of their doctrines are. While the "Church" has been fighting in the British courts for the right to advertise its beliefs, or whatever fraction thereof can be squeezed through the ITC guidelines, it has also been fighting in American courts to keep its deeper beliefs secret.

The point about Scientology is that it has concentric rings of belief. To qualify for each successive, deeper revelation of the profoundest truths about the universe, you have to have been qualified for all the previous ones.

The process is not free. In fact, it's not even cheap. By the time an initiate learns the Real Truth: that he is a reincarnated alien spirit, or operant Thetan, whose troubles are caused by evil spirits left over from previous incarnations and attached to him in the form of body hairs, he can have spent

Religion may be advertised as long as it does not pretend to be true

tens of thousands of dollars – which, of course, makes it clear that what he receives is a deep spiritual truth, whereas if you had paid only 40p for this revelation, you might be disposed to laugh.

Incidentally, I am not making any of this up. It was all made up in the early Fifties by L Ron Hubbard, the prolific writer of pulp science fiction who founded the "Church" and revealed its doctrines.

Further information is now accessible all over the Internet, and this is what the "Church" and its lawyers have been trying to stop.

Documents containing some of the group's innermost doctrines were deposited in a California court in the Eighties. Disaffected former members then posted them on to the Net. The group responded with a campaign of raids and seizures around the US, claiming that these documents were copyrighted trade secrets. Each time one of the dissidents was raided, sympathisers copied the documents more widely. At one stage, in a delightful irony, they were available from a computer in Peking, that citadel of free speech.

This story has a moral, as religious stories should. It has been a mistake to attempt to suppress the beliefs of Scientology. A far more effective brake on the progress of the group has been to disseminate its beliefs as widely as possible and let people (or aliens) make up their own minds.

The last Tory prime minister?

The ousting of John Major in a pre-election coup could spell the end of Conservative government

ANDREW MARR

John Major might be the last true leader of the Conservative Party; at least, of the Tory party as we have known it this century. That is the proper perspective from which to consider the latest fetid gush of speculation about his future. His steely blandness in the face of journalistic and political manoeuvring comes from the knowledge that if he cannot hold the party together, then probably no one can.

There are always plots and wheezes and alternative candidates. Yes, Michael Heseltine could take over and keep the seat hot for Chris Patten, swaying in by parachute in the autumn of 1997 as the Cathay Pacific jumbo roars in from Hong Kong. Alternatively, yes, just possibly, a Euro-sceptic succession could follow, with, say, John Redwood taking control after the election and the pro-Europeans, though sulking and humiliated, staying in the party to fight on.

But an experienced gambler would expect long odds on either kind of transition. They are too smooth for today's Conservatives to manage. Would Hezza, the white-maned Lion King, be simply allowed to assume the Prime Minister-ship? Many among the rebel right would suspect that there had been a private succession deal arranged between Major, Heseltine and Chris Patten, whatever hot denials tumbled out on the *Today* programme.

Their suspicion would be founded on at least some firm past history. There is indeed a private cadre of chums, or at least acquaintances, at the core of the party who believe that it belongs to them because they are decent and sensible and patriotic, and that's that. Their mutual understandings and unspoken beliefs are as near as the Conservative Party has to a soul.

This inner core is much diminished as compared to the heydays of the Blue Chip dining club in the Eighties. But one can still envisage a very private strategy meeting including people like Major, Ian Lang, Malcolm Rifkind, Brian Mawhinney, David Davis, possibly Lord Cranbourne. The exact membership of an undeclared and unofficial inner core is hard to gauge. But the Tory party has always had one: the day it disappears, so will the party.

There are two aspects of the stitch-up theory which I find hard to envisage. The first is that such an inner core, to which Michael Heseltine has never really belonged, would agree that Major must now go and Hezza must take over. The second is that, if they did reluctantly agree that this should happen, they would get their way.

Pretenders to the Tory leadership would be ill advised to jettison their leader before the next general election Photograph: Brian Harris

Why would the right assent to a bloodless coup by Tory centrists, when they think they are winning the whole darned party? Why would John Redwood allow that to happen? He has been running a remarkable personal campaign outside government, akin only to that of Heseltine himself in the Thatcher years.

He has reinvented himself in a most remarkable way. A few years ago, he was a bloodless, monochrome cabinet minister, the least well-known of the "bastard" trio. He was known to be clever but supercilious and terminally uncharismatic. Since leaving office, however, and challenging Major last summer, Redwood has grown steadily in stature. He is having fun. He is pouring out ideas and provocations. Not a Giant Redwood, then, but at least quite a big Redwood. Why would he forget it all to help Heseltine succeed? I think he wouldn't.

If Major resigned this weekend and threw his support behind the Deputy Prime Minister, then the right would fight. Could the Conservative government, so badly depleted in its majority and its sense of purpose, survive a leadership battle? We would have to start preparing for a general election in, say, June. Given the state of the polls, that's a funny kind of Tory survival strategy.

But the other scenario for a smooth Tory hand-over is equally hard to envisage, for different reasons. Whether Major stays or not, the anti-EU Tories cannot simply take the party over, for the same reason as the Bennites could never have successfully taken over the Labour Party in the early Eighties. There are too many important people and interests who wouldn't stand for it.

After a bitter and traumatic leadership contest and party conference, they would go. Though I've said it before, this bears repeating: a Conservative Party minus Kenneth Clarke, Heseltine, all the other pro-European MPs, and missing the exporting and business interests that back them would not be the Conservative Party. Whatever it called itself, it would be a lesser thing and a far less plausible party of government.

This is momentous stuff for everyone on the right of politics to think about. As the results of the local elections start to flow into BBC and ITN computers tonight there will be many people wishing for a maximum Tory rout. In the media, we will of course be looking for the best story possible; in this context, "best" means "biggest Government defeat". The position of the Opposition parties goes without saying.

But in the bowels of the Conservative Party itself there will be hundreds of rebels and romantics who will hug themselves with silent delight if the local electoral map turns red and yellow, who will grin with grim pleasure at every lurch of Peter Snow's swingometer. "Ah," they will say, "Now comes the great chance. Now we can get rid of that dreary, prevaricating no-hoper at last. We can win the European battle, get Goldsmith off our backs and raise the Union Jack against Labour in the coming election."

They are as nutty as a lorryload of Sunpat, the lot of them. Going for Major now is a recipe not for the revival of the Conservative Party but for its defeat and perhaps its disintegration. Once there was a time when this remarkable organisation had the central intelligence, the nervous system, which enabled it to shed one leader and grow another without damage. But because of the European question, that time has passed. Today it has an entirely different sort of nervous system, a brittle network of anxiety and suspicion.

This country knows John Major's faults. He is not a Disraeli in his speech, nor a Churchill in courage, nor a Thatcher in his sense of direction. He doesn't have the wit of a Macmillan or the astute sense of necessary political reform that marked out Lord Salisbury. (Had he had that sense, he would not have allowed the liberty of local government to be so eroded that elections, such as today's, become merely a grand opinion-poll on the performance of national government. In that way, as in others, Major is part author of his own misfortunes.)

But he is the best Prime Minister the party has got. Since that is a sneer, let me amend it: he is the Tory politician with the best chance of holding the party together and carrying it through the election campaign in a way that will allow it to be handed on to a new leadership as a single, plausible project. Many commentators, including some Tory MPs, believe the time has already passed for that project and that the Tories would be better to split.

Major, self-evidently, doesn't agree. He has expended his political energy over the past six years trying to hold the Tories together. If, in a mood of self-destructive hysteria over the next few weeks, he ceases to be party leader, then there is a real chance that he will indeed be the last Conservative leader of all.

Why Britain now needs a Socialist Labour Party

Tony Blair can't help the working class, says **Arthur Scargill**

This coming Saturday, the founding conference of the Socialist Labour Party will be held. The decision to launch this party has not been taken lightly. It is based on an amalgam of analysis, experience and emotion which has produced the conclusion that "new Labour" can no longer offer a home to those who want to work for socialism.

When, last October, Clause IV, with its commitment to common ownership, was cut out of the party constitution, I was faced with a challenge I could not duck or hide from. Commitment to the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange was a cornerstone, a founding principle in the Labour Party that was born nearly a century ago. It was a constitutional aim that made Labour fundamentally different from the Tories and the Liberals.

The new rulebook adopted at the 1995 Labour Party conference, however, went far beyond ditching Clause IV. The new rules, together with fundamental policy changes, mean that – as Tony Blair has declared – "new Labour" is a "new and different party", which has now actually embraced capitalism and the "free market".

On all the fundamental issues that affect the lives of working class people, their families and communities, "new Labour" has adopted policies that cannot be supported by those who call themselves socialist. On privatisation, "new Labour" is clear that it will not reverse and repair the appalling social/economic damage created by the Tories' privatisation programme.

On unemployment – "new Labour" has abandoned a commitment to full employment, with its leadership declaring it cannot guarantee that "new Labour" could eradicate unemployment. In reality, a British government could do exactly that, even within a capitalist society – by introducing a four-day working week with no loss of pay, banning all non-essential overtime, and introducing voluntary retirement on full pay at the age of 55. It is economic insanity to pay out more than £50bn a year on unemployment when the measures referred to above could create full employment. But the very nature of capitalism cannot cope with such measures.

On pensions, "new Labour" is in the process of abandoning the principle of universal pension provision for all citizens, and is examining ways in which workers will have to pay for pension security and for care in old age.

These are just three fundamental issues which have given rise to such grave concerns throughout the working-class constituency that originally gave birth to the Labour Party. I believe that this situation has presented socialists with an inescapable challenge.

The decision taken a few months ago, in January, to establish a Socialist Labour Party has met with enthusiastic response from trade unions, pensioner and environmental activists, and single-issue campaigners. It has, of course, also aroused hostility and derision in certain quarters. Much of the criticism has come from the "left" in the Labour movement as well as from the "right".

The hostility from some on the left is actually reminiscent of the response to the birth of the Labour Party nearly a century ago. At the Labour Representation Committee's founding conference in 1900, trade unions generally, including the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, refused to attend, opposing the birth of a socialist Labour Party as a threat to the Liberal Party.

While Socialist Labour is born from the frustration and anger of trade union and Labour movement activists who feel disenfranchised by "new Labour", its founding spirit is overwhelmingly positive, full of hope – and belief that that hope can be fulfilled.

The writer is leader of the Socialist Labour Party.

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Investment: Railtrack is one to be aboard 20

BUSINESS NEWS DESK: tel 0171-293 2530 fax 0171-293 2098
CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

MMC leak inquiry focuses on Offer and OFT

MICHAEL HARRISON

The DTI inquiry into the leaking of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on two takeover bids in the electricity industry is focusing on the Office of Electricity Supply and the Office of Fair Trading.

The two regulatory bodies are among only a handful of organisations and individuals that received advance copies of the highly sensitive document.

Fewer than a dozen copies of the confidential report are thought to have been circulated ahead of the Trade and Industry Secretary Ian Lang's announcement last week that he had decided to block the two bids by National Power and PowerGen for regional electricity companies.

Copies of the final report – which included highly sensitive commercial information that does not appear in the published version – were sent to the two regulatory bodies, the five members of the MMC panel that conducted the inquiry and the Department of Trade and Industry.

It is not thought that the report was circulated to any other government departments, with the possible exception of the Treasury.

A political storm blew up when extracts from the report appeared in the *Economist* magazine. The DTI demanded the return of the document but Adam Raphael, the *Economist* journalist, refused to comply. The DTI has since obtained an injunction preventing the magazine from publishing further extracts from the report.

Mr Lang was advised to refer the bids to the MMC by the director general of fair trading, John Bridgeman, and the director general of electricity supply, Professor Stephen Littlechild. In evidence to the MMC inquiry, Professor Littlechild said the bids should be blocked because of their potential detrimental effects on competition in electricity supply and generation. "The likely consequence would be less competition, higher prices and less effective choice for electricity customers," he said.

The MMC panel ruled by a majority of four to one that although the two mergers could be expected to operate against the public interest they should be allowed to go ahead subject to certain undertakings.

The dissenting member was Patricia Hodgson, the MMC's director of policy and planning, who argued that competition was insufficient and that if the mergers went ahead there would be less competition and less chance of prices falling.

Whitehall sources said the leak was being pursued vigorously because of its seriousness and because of the highly confidential information in the unpublished version of the report.

"On a scale of one to 10 this leak ranks somewhere near the top in terms of its seriousness," one source said. "Bits of MMC reports or individual pieces of evidence may have been leaked before but never an entire completed report." Ministers are also thought to be concerned about the leaked report being stolen and sold to the highest bidder, because of the commercial information in it.

The leak inquiry is understood to have cleared the DTI and the five members of the MMC panel. In a letter to the *Economist*'s editor Bill Emmott, the head of the DTI's Consumer Affairs and Competition Policy Directorate Paul Salvidge said the report was "the property of the Secretary of State" and must be returned.

Grid still in dark over sale of shares

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

The National Grid failed yesterday in its bid to clarify the intentions of James Capel, the HSBC-owned broker that became the electricity transmission company's largest shareholder with the acquisition on Tuesday of Hanson's 12.5 per cent stake.

It also remained in the dark over the intentions of Suliman Olayan, the Saudi billionaire understood to be underwriting the acquisition of the shares.

A spokesman for the Grid said it had sent out demands for information, known as 212 notices, to James Capel and Hanson on Tuesday. The return of those notices yesterday confirmed that Capel was the beneficial owner of a 12.2 per cent stake in the Grid.

Capel would not elaborate on its statement on Tuesday that it had entered into a "structurerd transaction" with a subsidiary of the Olayan Group to hedge the risk of holding the shares. A spokesman for Olayan Europe in London also refused to add anything to the Capel statement.

Further information about the Saudi businessman emerged yesterday. Awarded the KBE in 1987 by the Queen, he has also been honoured by King Carlos of Spain and King Carl Gustaf of Sweden.

His 49-year-old company operates more than 30 businesses and financial enterprises in the Middle East and around the world.

The National Grid said yesterday it had issued a further 212 notice to the Olayan Group and expected to hear from the company today. It is also trying to contact the company to clarify its position.

John Uttley, finance director, said: "We always welcome long-term shareholders – where ever they may be. It's always nice not to have all your eggs in one basket. I don't think, in itself, it gives rise to concern."

Meanwhile, Hanson reiterated the fact that as far as it was concerned it had sold the stake and retained no interest. Christopher Collins, vice-chairman, described as pure coincidence the appointment of Niven Duncan, a former chairman designate of Eastern Group, Hanson's electricity distribution subsidiary, as a consultant to the Olayan Group.

He confirmed that Hanson retained no economic interest in the Grid shares and denied speculation that the company had struck any so-called contracts for difference with James Capel, which would allow it to participate in any up-lift in the value of the shares without actually owning them.

As the owner of a regional electricity company, Hanson is prohibited from owning more than 1 per cent of the shares. Thanks to the terms of a government golden share all other shareholders are restricted to 15 per cent stakes, limiting the prospect that any Olayan holding might be the prelude to further corporate activity.

500,000 in record rush to register for Railtrack

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

A record 500,000 potential investors registered in the seven days up to Monday night for the Railtrack share sale, a bigger final week rush than in any other privatisation.

The Government announced yesterday that it expected Railtrack to fetch between £1.75bn and £1.95bn as Clare Short, the Labour shadow transport secretary, labelled the sale an "act of vandalism" and Jimmy Knapp, leader of the RMT rail union, called it "a rip-off". The Liberal leader, Paddy Ashdown, said: "The Government has undervalued the railways."

But Sir George Young, the transport secretary, said "some of our critics spend half their time saying we are giving it away and the other half saying don't touch the shares. They are in a real muddle on this one."

The Government is to sell 100 per cent of Railtrack – 500 million shares – with the price to be set a fortnight from tomorrow on the basis of a book-building exercise with institutions.

Analysts were divided yesterday after seeing the full prospectus, with some saying they were telling their clients to wait until after the sale to buy in the market and others recommending purchase even at the top end of the expected price range.

Retail investors will be offered a 10p discount on the first instalment, setting their price range at 340p to 380p on the fully-paid shares and 190p on the first instalment – a £20 discount on the minimum investment of 200 shares. Institutions will pay 350p-390p a share, with a first instalment of 200p.

The Government has loaded the offer with goodies to offset the anti-privatisation campaigns by Labour and other opponents of the sale.

This makes the return in the first year highly attractive, especially to private investors, with advisers pointing out that the annualised yield up to February next year when the interim dividend is to be paid works out at 25 per cent for retail investors eligible for a discount.

This comprises a final dividend in the autumn to be paid out of last year's profits – made while in the public sector – the interim dividend in February and the 10p-a-share discount on the first instalment. Before tax, these give a gross 18.8 per cent return on the part-paid price of 190p in the first nine months. The net final dividend after tax will be 13.75p. It is expected the interim will be half as much.

James Sassoon, a director of SBC Warburg, the global co-ordinators of the sale, said the 500,000 registrations last week were "a larger number for the final week than we have seen in any previous privatisation".

The last-minute rush took the total number of registrations to 1.9 million, though advisers conceded it might have been accelerated by the shorter-than-usual period for registration.

Mr Sassoon said the 1.9 million was two-thirds as many as registered for the much larger £4bn sale of the Government's remaining stake in the electricity generating companies last year, privatisations twice the value of Railtrack.

The Government said at least 30 per cent of the shares would be allocated to retail investors, but Mr Sassoon said "we could go north of 30 per cent and will do if the demand is there".

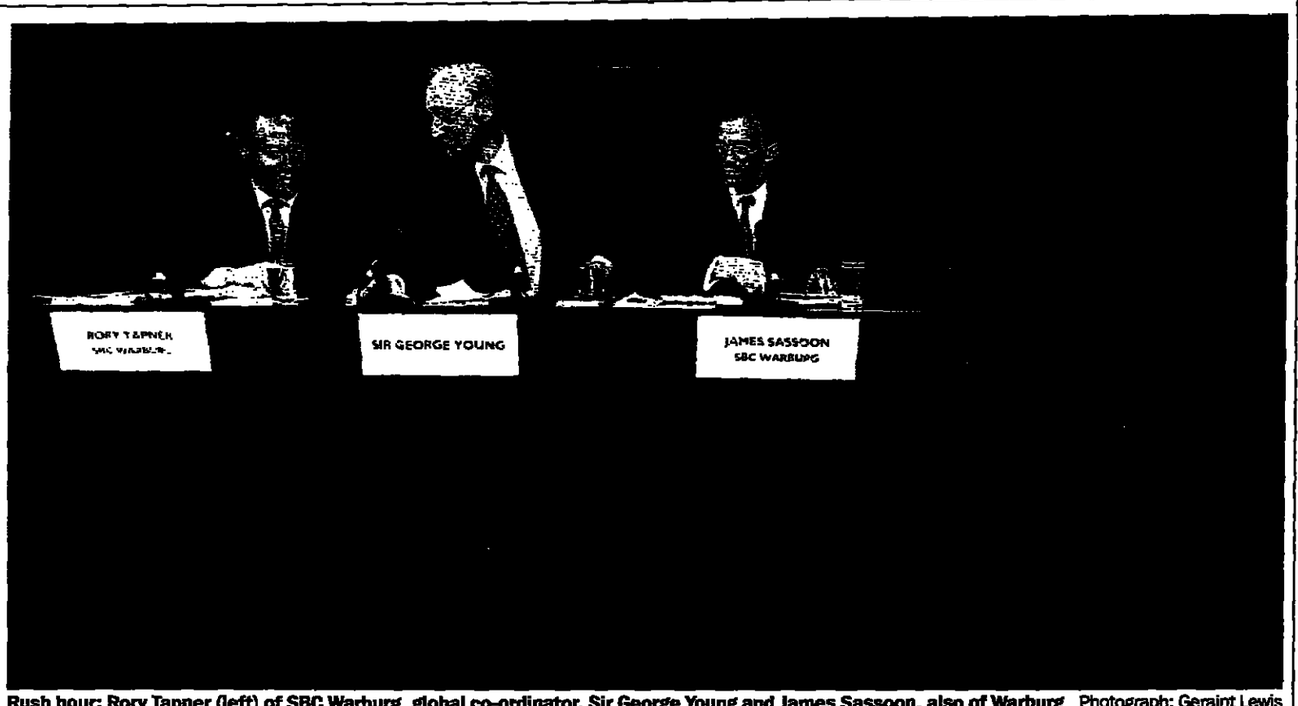
Advisers believe that on the basis of the registrations so far the retail allocation could exceed 40 per cent even if it does not reach the maximum possible 50 per cent.

In most past privatisations, at least 30 per cent of registrants have ended up applying for shares, and at that level the retail part of the offer would be about twice subscribed.

Rory Tapner of SBC Warburg said that the roadshow of institutions in California earlier this week had produced "good quality feedback" and further presentations are to be made over the next fortnight in the US and Europe before the final price is set on 17 May ahead of the start of trading on 20 May. The UK retail offer closes at noon on 15 May.

The prospectus disclosed that Railtrack's costs for the sale are only £27m before VAT, compared with a provision of £46m made in Railtrack's accounts for the year to March 1995.

Investment Column, page 20



Rush hour: Rory Tapner (left) of SBC Warburg, global co-ordinator, Sir George Young and James Sassoon, also of Warburg Photograph: Geraint Lewis

ICI looks outside for top managers

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Charles Miller Smith, chief executive of ICI, is seeking to "widen the gene pool" of top management in a radical shift in staffing policies at the giant chemicals group. Mr Miller Smith, who arrived from Unilever at the end of 1994, is to seek replacements for around a quarter of its top 150 executives from outside the group, including recruiting locally for many of its overseas operations.

The indications were yesterday that the new policy, unveiled to a meeting of several hundred senior staff at the end of February, would not result in redundancies, but it will have sent shock waves through the group. Historically, ICI has promoted its senior staff from within. One insider said yesterday: "This change has never been stated before. ICI has always been a company which has grown its own talent internally. This is the first time in [my] eight years with the company that anyone has been so straightforward."


Policy shift: Charles Miller Smith wants new blood

Before Mr Miller Smith arrived, appointments from outside the group at senior levels were rare. The arrival of Colin Short from Chevron as finance director caused quite a stir in the late 1980s. He has since moved on to become chairman of United Biscuits.

After less than a year as chief executive and an extensive review of the business involving management consultants McKinsey, Mr Miller Smith has now said he wants to get new blood into the company. This will mainly affect the operating businesses below main board level, which include paints, explosives, acrylics and polyurethanes. He has said he wants to get local people in on the ground in these operations, which span the world and are increasingly being moved towards the Far East. Around 30 to 40 executives will be recruited from outside.

But ICI sources played down the prospect of senior level redundancies. "I wouldn't think large numbers would be lopped off immediately, but we would be seeking to recruit people over a period of 18 months," the source said.

The latest revelations come after an extensive communications exercise by Mr Miller Smith.

Comment, page 19

Chairman's wife sells £13.5m stake in Lloyds Chemist

NIGEL COPE

The wife of Allen Lloyd, the chairman of the Lloyds Chemists chain which is the subject of a hotly contested £650m takeover battle, sold her entire shareholding in the company yesterday, raising £13.5m.

Marilyn Lloyd sold 3 million shares at 450p, though the company denied the sale was related to the two bids for the group from Gehe of Germany and the UK's Unichem. The company said Mrs Lloyd had disposed of her stake "solely with the view to diversifying her assets".

However, the sale will be viewed as an attempt by the controlling family to lock in profits ahead of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigations into the two bids. The shares dipped 4p to 465p on news of the sale.

Allen Lloyd retains 6.11 million shares worth £28m and confirmed yesterday that he has "no intention" of selling his stake, "at least until the outcome of the MMC inquiry into the twin bids from Gehe and Unichem".

Both bids lapsed in March when they were referred to the MMC. The British government said both bids raised competition concerns in the wholesale and European drugs markets.

The MMC must report its findings by the end of June and the final DTI announcement a month later. It is possible that both bids will be blocked, which would cause a sharp fall in the Lloyds Chemists shares price

The prolonged bid battle for Lloyds has been supporting the shares though recent results have been disappointing. Last month the company warned that costs and uncertainties associated with the bid would hit this year's results.

First-half profits fell from £26.6m to £25.8m but the management said the full-year figures would be affected by bid costs of £4m and further losses in its drug store outlets.

Bupa pays £68m for Greenalls' nursing homes

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Bupa, the mutually owned private health care group, is to become the UK's biggest operator of upmarket nursing homes after paying £68m for Greenalls' Country House Group.

Bupa beat off fierce competition to clinch the deal after the business was put up for sale by Greenalls following its £518m takeover of previous owners, the rival pub and hotel group Boddington at the end of last year.

It marks the healthcare group's return to the nursing home sector after selling its own 10 homes to Boddington for £27m in December 1994. It now regains those original 10 and picks up 20 more, giving it 1,250 registered beds, plus another home operated under a management contract.

Edward Lea, Bupa's finance director, said: "This was an opportunity to gain critical mass in a market which we didn't have before." He said it planned to double the size of Country House over the next five to seven years, spending between £50m and £70m over that period to raise bed numbers to around 2,500. There would be opportunities to move out of the South-east of England, where most of the Country House homes are situated, both through purpose-built operations and acquisitions.

The move fits in with the group's strategy of widening its scope, he said. Last week it launched Bupa FutureCare, a new form of insurance which provides nursing care for people when they can no longer look after themselves.

Greenalls chairman and chief executive, Andrew Thomas, said: "Country House is an excellent business, but nursing homes are not an area in which we would wish to invest further."

The proceeds would go to repay debt and invest further in the group's pubs and hotels, he said. The group has set itself the target of cutting gearing from just below 75 per cent immediately following the Boddington purchase to under 70 per cent by this September. The full £68m proceeds would cut that figure to 63 per cent, but it is expected that Greenalls will reinvest up to half the total in the business.

Investment is likely to be skewed towards the restaurant and hotel divisions. Greenalls owns 165 restaurants, including the Miller's Kitchen and Henry's Table brands and the 45-strong Premier Lodge chain, which ranks behind Granada's Travelodge and Whitbread's Travel Inn in size.

Country House made profits of £6.1m in the year to last December, when it had net assets, free of debt and cash, of £66m. Up to 20 groups were initially involved in bidding for the business in an auction organised by Schroders, the merchant bank. One of the beaten bidders, Glasgow-based operator Ashbourne, said yesterday the price paid by Bupa "should tell everyone that the sector, particularly the top end, is undervalued".

Greenalls shares added 8p to 632p yesterday.

'Independent' reporter wins accountancy award


Roger Trapp: 'Always searches out those who have fresh perspectives' Photograph: Edward Webb

Roger Trapp, the *Independent*'s editor of finance and law, has been named Accountancy Journalist of the year for 1995 by the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants.

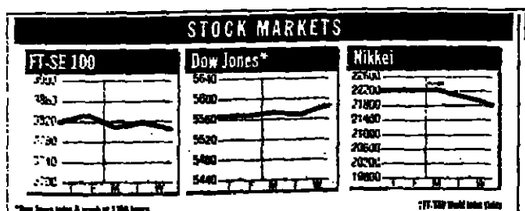
Presenting the award at a lunch in London yesterday, Lord Barnett, chairman of the adjudication panel, said Mr Trapp maintained a consistently high standard of journalism across the broad spectrum of financial and management issues he covered.

"There is a refreshing clarity and lightness of touch about his writing. Whatever the topic, he always searches out those who have fresh perspectives and something of interest to say. He explains the relevance of issues to his readers in an imaginative and relevant way."

Mr Trapp, who has been runner-up on three previous occasions, received a silver salver and a cheque for £1,000.

Robert Bruce, accountancy correspondent of the *Times* and last year's winner, was runner-up.

STOCK MARKETS

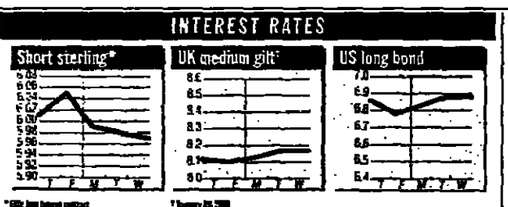


Indices

Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1995/96 High	1995/96 Low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	3806.00	-11.90	-0.3	3857.10	3639.50	3.91
FTSE 250	4540.10	-11.70	-0.3	4568.60	4015.30	3.28
FTSE 350	1925.90	-5.80	-0.3	1945.40	1816.60	3.77
FT Small Cap	2231.70	+0.79	+0.0	2231.70	1954.06	2.89
FT All Share	1909.39	-5.22	-0.3	1924.17	1791.95	3.70
New York *	5566.78	+17.70	+0.3	5689.74	3832.08	2.17
Tokyo	21816.01	-226.29	-1.0	22282.05	19734.70	0.70†
Hong Kong	10907.01	-57.52	-0.5	11594.99	10073.39	3.30†
Frankfurt	2505.25	closed	-	2538.26	2253.88	1.87†

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES



Money Market Rates / Bond Yields *

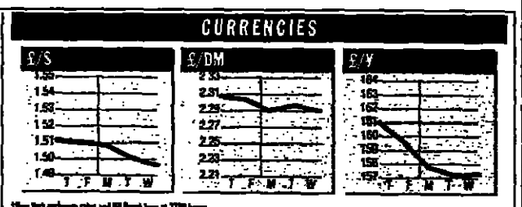
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Bond (%)	Year Ago	Long Bond	(%) Year Ago
UK	6.00	6.38	8.03	8.36	8.14	8.36
US	5.34	5.72	6.66	6.95	6.89	7.25
Japan	0.53	1.06	2.51	2.68	-	-
Germany	3.25	3.25	Closed	7.01	Closed	-

*Benchmark indices

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Price (p)	Change (p)	Change%	Falls	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change
London Intl Group	146	6	4.3	Courtaulds Textile	373	45	10.8
Man (E D & F)	176	6	3.5	Sage Group	435	24	5.2
Raton Group	139	4	3.0	Coats Viyella	185	7	3.6

CURRENCIES



Pound

	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
$ (London)	1.4965	-0.41c	1.6165
$ (N York)‡	1.4953	-0.87c	1.6170
DM (London)	2.2950	-0.62pf	2.2220
¥ (London)	157.305	+V0.115	134.590
£ Index	83.5	-0.3	84.6

Dollar

	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
£ (London)	0.6682	+0.18	0.6186
£ (N York)‡	0.6688	+0.39	0.6184
DM (London)	1.5336	unch	1.3746
¥ (London)	105.115	+V0.36	82.26
$ Index	96.5	+0.1	87.4

OTHER INDICATORS

	Yesterday	Day's chg	Year Ago		Index	Latest	Yr Ago	Next Figs
Oil Brent $	19.33	+0.31	18.52	RPI	151.5	+2.7pc	147.5	16 May
Gold $	393.55	+1.95	388.60	GDP	107.4	+2.0pc	105.3	23 May
Gold £	262.98	+2.02	240.39	Base Rates	—	6.00pc	6.75	—

acceptance and surgery.

"It was like coming home," she said. "When I realised that

behaviour of the school directors breached the 1976 Euro-

that the Government

have to amend legislation.

birth certificates and passports.

M'learned friends set up a protection scheme

COMMENT

'With a litigation culture developing to rival that of the US – even landscape gardeners now feel obliged to take out professional indemnity cover – it is understandable that professionals want to avoid the principles of joint and several liability'

If you can't sue 'em, then join 'em is the expression, m'lud. There is an exquisite irony in the news that Dibb Lupton Broomhead and Linklaters & Paines are thinking of abandoning partnership for corporate or limited liability status.

For years law firms grew fat on fee income earned from helping aggrieved clients pursue negligence claims against their auditors. Until, that is, the accountants decided to squirrel away the yacht, the Roller and the second home from the reaches of m'learned friends by incorporating.

It was inevitable that sooner or later the legal profession would go the same way. The floodgates may not yet have opened in the way they have with auditors. But the £610m claim Clifford Chance is facing from a group of Canadian banks over the collapse of Olympia and York is a harbinger of things to come.

With a litigation culture developing to rival that of the US – even landscape gardeners now feel obliged to take out professional indemnity cover – it is understandable that professionals will want to avoid the principles of joint and several liability. After all, they hark back to a time long ago when it was reasonable to assume that all partners knew each other intimately.

Now, even a regional-based firm such as Dibb Lupton has well over 100 partners. Many City firms will have similar numbers spread around the globe. It is therefore not inconceivable that an individual could lose not just his or her shirt but also the house and everything they own because of the acts of somebody they have never met.

Very few claims actually come to court, but the cost – in terms of money and management time – of dealing with the countless number brought because of the perception that their insurance cover gives them "deep pockets" can be huge enough to distract an organisation from its main purpose.

Dibb Lupton is seeking to convince us that its motivation is not to protect its partners' assets but to improve its long-term investment arrangements and give staff a share of the profits.

Pull the other one, as they say down at the Bailey. Let there be no mistake: the motivation is the desire for protection and the place the lawyers may seek it is Jersey, where the good burghers are dreaming up a new law that will allow professions to be partnerships with limited liability at the same time. It would be more than a little unsettling to see some of our most famous legal names dashing offshore in order to avoid their pursuers. But it might be amusing to all those they have persecuted in the past.

Circus and lip service rule the agm

British public companies have always tended to regard annual general meetings as an unnecessary irritant, like a nasty dose of flu that comes round once a year. These days it is not just the inconvenience of having to answer to shareholders, informed and otherwise, that causes the irritation. Agms have long been a focus for pressure groups and single-issue politics – most of us remember Barclays and South Africa – but in recent years a growing number of worthy causes have come forward to use them as a platform for protest – Navajo Indians, Cedric the pig, Action Against Smoking, Uncle Tom Cobbleigh and all. One share buys you your passport to the meeting.

Occasionally, as happened yesterday at the British Aerospace agm, or earlier this year at Hanson, their antics reduce proceedings to the level of farce. When this happens it becomes an embarrassment and distraction not just to directors but to other shareholders too. Most of those who attend do so because they have invested in the company and want to know how it is doing. Those there for other reasons, however legitimate, get in the way of the proper purpose of the meeting, which tends to become unstructured, disorderly and sometimes a complete waste of time.

But it is hard to see how these groups could be excluded, even assuming that it is right to do so. Legislation against the obstreperous minority always ultimately ends up harming the legitimate majority. When BAe attempted to curb the rights of shareholders – a move designed at least in part as a way of dealing with protest of yesterday's variety – it was rightly sent away with a flea in its ear.

In Japan, the solution to the extortion gangs that used to plague annual general meetings was to declare that they all happen on the same day. Nobody would seriously suggest that as a possibility here but something plainly has to be done if this little enclave of the free market system is to survive.

Making the annual general meeting a more serious and prolonged event, much as they are in Germany, might be one way forward. In Britain they tend to be little more than an after-thought, lip service to the Companies Act and the idea of shareholder democracy. It is no surprise in these circumstances that they are being turned into a circus. A more vigorous, time-consuming and patient approach to these events is the way to go.

The long knives appear at ICI

It was a sign of Charles Miller Smith's special status as an outsider that he did not join the ICI pension fund when he became chief executive, but opted instead for a large annual payment into his own pension plan.

As a company that has traditionally looked after its always very long-serving executives with a comfortable retirement, that certainly set him apart from the previous generations of ICI men. Now the former finance director of Unilever has served notice that long service will no longer be a part of the ICI culture at all.

In an extraordinary interview yesterday he announced that he expected to replace 30 to 40 of his 150 top executives with outsiders over the next 18 months. ICI confirmed the figures, but its explanation that the replacements would fall naturally into slots vacated by retiring executives was unconvincing, to say the least.

Unless the age profile of ICI's top 150 is out of line with other large companies, it is unlikely that 40 of its most senior people will be up for normal retirement by the autumn of 1997.

This has the characteristics of a purge that might do more to unsettle management than incentivise it, at least it in the short term. What a cheering and motivating idea for the present incumbents, that nearly a third of long-serving executives are not up to the new standards set by an outsider with the help of McKinsey's.

ICI insisted that Mr Miller Smith had briefed senior executives on his intentions, but it is not at all clear that they knew the brutal arithmetic until they read their newspapers.

It is hard to believe that the way it emerged will boost confidence in Mr Miller Smith's plans to shake up a company that has only just completed the most radical reorganisation in its post-war history.

Courtaulds Textiles shares dive

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Courtaulds Textiles saw its shares plunge yesterday as it warned of losses in the US and more redundancies at home in its second profits warning in little over four months. The textile group had £47m wiped off its market value after the shares slid 45p to 373p following comments by the chairman, John Eccles, to the annual general meeting.

Noel Jervis: Warns of more redundancies

Mr Eccles said the weak trading conditions in the US reported at the full-year results announcement in February "have proved to be more severe and long-lasting than previously expected. Additionally, lace markets in continental Europe have been softer since the turn of the year". The result for the group's continuing businesses in the first half of 1996 is now likely to be "substantially" below that of the previous year, with the US business showing a small loss, he said.

Analysts were yesterday surprised by the scale of the impact, cutting full-year profit forecasts by between £2m and £7m to £40m to £42m. Courtaulds had warned in December that its US business was being hit by destocking after US retailers and lingerie manufacturers over-estimated consumer demand in the run-up to Christmas. In February, it said the problem was likely to continue until the end of March.

Chris Burbridge of UBS said: "I was not surprised by the style of the statement, but I was surprised by the degree. The company had made it quite clear that the States would be the problem, but the word 'substantial' had a fair old sting in it."

The US problems follow difficulties faced by Courtaulds Textiles and the rest of the industry last year after a sharp run-up in raw materials prices and weak consumer demand. That helped to cut underlying profits by 12 per cent to £40.4m in 1995.

Noel Jervis, Courtaulds Textiles' chief executive, said the group had left many of the problems of last year behind it, but, as it warned in February, the US destocking had continued. There were now clear signs of improvement. The order pipeline was filling up as customers recognised that the destocking phase was coming to an end and, as a result, manufacturing activity was returning to a degree of normality.

However, he warned that the changing nature of the business would have an impact on jobs. The group has been running short-time working at its three US factories in the first quarter and recently laid off 100 of its 1,000-strong US workforce. At home it has axed 600 to 700 jobs with the closure of two spinning and several small clothing factories in the first three months of the year.

Investment Column, page 20

IN BRIEF

• **NatWest Group** will be taking a £700m exceptional loss in its 1996 first half accounts following completion yesterday of the sale of Bancorp, its retail banking operation in the US. NatWest sold Bancorp to Fleet Financial Group for £2.2bn, but the loss derives from a technical accounting requirement because it has sold the operation against a book value inflated by having to add back into it over £800m of goodwill previously written off.

• **General Accident's** shares slipped 7p to 625p after it warned that results for the year to date were at a significantly lower level than the previous year because of claims relating to adverse weather conditions. The general and life insurer said severe weather in its three main areas of business – the US, UK and Canada – in 1996 compared with very favourable weather conditions in 1995. Sun Alliance also reported lower operating profits in the first quarter, but said the result was still ahead of expectations.

• **Royal Bank of Scotland** is selling its 50 per cent investment in CC-Holdings of Germany to Spain's Banco Santander for £130m. The pre-tax gain on sale is expected to be £70m. The transaction means Santander – in which Royal Bank has a 4.3 per cent stake – will own all of CC-Holdings, the holding company of CC-Bank AG, a consumer bank that has 50 branches and assets of about DM4bn (£1.7bn).

• **Fifty-seven per cent of British manufacturing exporters** consider that a single European currency would help their business, according to the DHL Quarterly Export Indicator published yesterday. However, 44 per cent of respondents said they were very unfamiliar with what a single currency would mean.

• **Foreign & Colonial** leapt up the league of UK pension fund managers with the purchase yesterday of the electricity industry's £14.4bn pension fund business, ESN. Foreign & Colonial paid up to £53m, due in cash instalments over two years, for the deal, which doubles its funds under management to around £28bn. F&C argued a good fit between its global retail expertise and ESN's experience in managing large UK pension fund assets.

• **The Accounting Standards Board** is seeking views on international proposals on earnings per share and segmental reporting in order to help it reflect UK views when they are discussed by other bodies and see if any changes are needed to UK standards.

business

Railtrack is one to be aboard

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

An extraordinary surge of 500,000 registrations for the Railtrack retail offer over the last week coincided with yet another bout of bad publicity for the flotation. Leaked documents suggested that the prospectus estimates for repairing bridges and tunnels were billions of pounds too low.

On close examination, it all turned out to be a pretty meaningless comparison of chalk and cheese. But even the scary headlines seem to have failed to deter the army of potential retail investors from putting their names down for the application pack. Something has clearly been happening in the undergrowth over the last few days that even Railtrack's advisers cannot firmly identify.

One reason is the shorter than usual application period. But given the low-key advertising campaign, the most convincing theory was that the personal finance pages have been so solidly favourable for the last few weeks on the grounds that the yield on offer is irresistible.

Railtrack is to pay a 17.2p a share final dividend in the autumn. This will be followed swiftly by an interim next February worth about 8.6 p. With a 10p discount on the first instalment the total benefit for retail investors is 35.8p, or 18.8 per cent on the 190p part-paid shares in the nine months to February.

Annualising this to 25 per cent over nine months, as some Railtrack advisers were doing yesterday, is not particularly meaningful for private investors going into this as a long-term yield stock rather than a quick punt. But even 18.8 per cent over the full year until the second instalment is due is handsome enough. This promise may have led to a belated snowballing of retail registrations, which reached 1.9 million at the close. If you assume conservatively that 30 per cent of registrants will apply for an average £2,000 a go, then £1.1bn of retail money will chase a minimum allocation of £550m, making it twice subscribed.

Since it looks as if the retail element of the sale will be enlarged above the minimum 30 per cent, cutting into the institutional allocation, that in turn gives SBC Warburg a useful lever. In theory, the retail offer could rise to nearly 50 per cent, and it is certainly likely to top 40 per cent. The prospect of a shortage of institutional stock in early trading should help along nicely the bookbuilding exercise that sets the price. It would not be surprising to see the gross dividend yield coming out well below the top of the 6.60 to 7.36 per cent forecast yesterday. A yield of, say, 7 per cent still puts Railtrack significantly above the water and electricity companies and BT.

With political risk from Labour looking less serious by the day, there is a very strong case to be made for Railtrack shares as a high-yielding utility stock. This is not one to miss.

Pain continues at Courtaulds

It has been a dismal six months for Britain's textile groups. Last year the industry was caught between the rock of soaring raw materials prices and the hard place of depressed consumer demand, exacerbated by the unusually warm summer. That produced a crop of profits warnings around the turn of the year, including one from Courtaulds Textiles, which as well as the problems at home, had to cope with the impact of destocking by US retailers.

Although it said in February that the problems across the Atlantic were likely to continue until March, it is clear from yesterday's new profit warning that the pain has continued longer than expected. The glitch stemmed from US retailers and lingerie manufacturers being forced to run down stocks in November and December last year after over-estimating the growth in consumer demand last year. That naturally hit suppliers like Courtaulds Textiles, which supplies close to $200m of stretch fabric and lace into this market, representing around 12 per cent of the group's sales.

But continued destocking in the first quarter has cut sales in the business by 30 per cent and it now looks as if the US operation will make a small loss in the first half. Given profits last time, that will represent a £6m turnround from the first six months of 1995.

Analysts yesterday pared their profit forecasts by between £2m and £7m, with UBS now looking for around £42m for the current year. Whether that proves enough will depend on how the rest of the year turns out. Noel Jervis, chief executive, claims there are clear signs of a pick-up in the US. Orders are rising again as customers see light at the end of the destocking tunnel. Manufacturing activity is returning to normal and, meanwhile, the UK market is showing stirrings of life.

Even so, Courtaulds Textiles has a wall of credibility to climb before it can restore its reputation with the stock market. It has embarked on a rationalisation exercise. But its decision to move more manufacturing off shore has come late in the day.

The forward multiple of 12 and yield of 5.2 per cent may not be enough to sustain the shares, down 45p at 373p, in the short term. Unattractive.

Sage, safe and sound

Think of a technology stock and it probably conjures up an element of glamourous, leading-edge products set to transform our lives. In that context Sage, the accountancy software firm, may be something of a disappointment, as boring and predictable as many of the customers it serves. Its unbroken profits record, however, is anything but dull.

Sage has built up a substantial following precisely because it is not prone to delivering the periodic profit warnings that dog the rest of the sector. Since being floated at the equivalent of 26p in 1989, it has hardly put a foot wrong and, in the last year the shares have outperformed a rising stock market by more than 100 per cent.

The Sage trick is to ensure that new customers become an annual stream of high-margin maintenance charges by signing them up for software upgrades, telephone helplines and training where competition is weakest. Of Sage's 870,000 registered users, 164,000 are covered by these support-service contracts that now account for almost half of total income.

Given this highly visible earnings stream, it is hardly surprising the latest half-year figures created few waves. Pre-tax profits grew from £11.7m to £16.1m on sales 42 per cent higher at £71.8m. Significantly, new business in the form of primary software sales was 38 per cent ahead at £33.7m.

Although the UK accounts for the lion's share of profits, France is the largest revenue area and margins there should improve as a more marketing-led approach with emphasis on recurring revenues is applied. Further expansion in Europe is also on the cards.

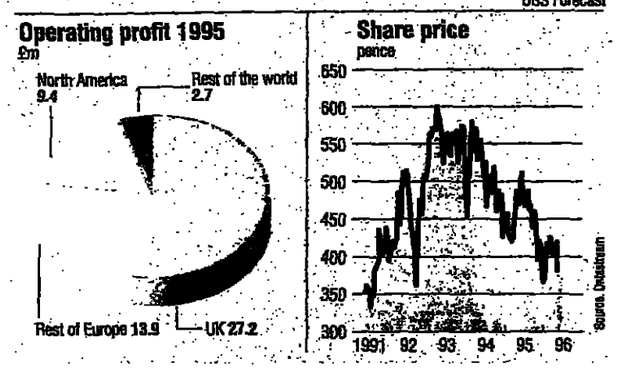
UBS is sticking with its full-year pre-tax forecast of £30.3m, implying a p/e ratio of 23. The shares encountered some profit-taking yesterday, slipping 25p to 435p on the figures, but they remain among the safest bets in a notoriously volatile sector. The premium rating is deserved.

Courtaulds Textiles at a glance

Market value: £386m, share price 373p

5-year record	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995*
Turnover (£bn)	0.89	0.92	1.05	1.12	n/a
Pre-tax profits (£m)	39.1	38.8	47.3	36.5	42
Earnings per share (pence)	30.1	29.2	33.7	25.4	30
Dividends per share (pence)	13.6	14.2	15.0	15.3	15.5

*UBS Forecast



Gardens lose lure for the Woolwich whistle-blower

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

The whistle-blower who sneaked on Peter Robinson, the recently ousted chief executive of Woolwich Building Society, is now known throughout the society as "Mo' the Grass". One allegation, of course, was that Mr Robinson had used the society's own gardeners to work at his house.

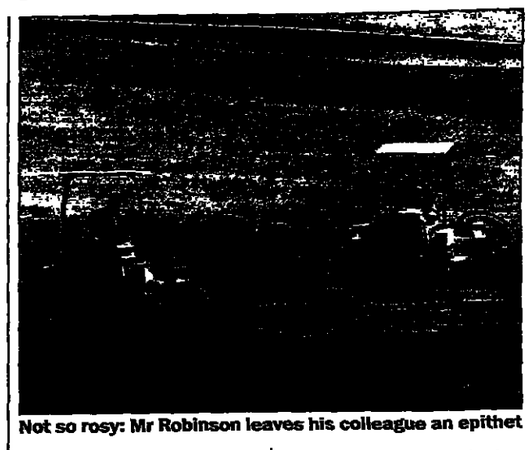
Sid is dead. Long Live Sid! The advisers to the much-derided Railtrack float failed completely to conceal their glee yesterday as applications for the last week broke all privatisation records.

Contrary to the predictions of a cynical press, the small investor has not lost faith in such offers after all. Over half a million people applied for Railtrack shares in the week to 29 April, ignoring completely the plethora of "Sid is dead" headlines in the papers. One senior adviser to the float chortled yesterday: "Any publicity is good publicity."

Oxford United fanatic John Dunsmore is leaving NatWest Securities after three years to join Scottish & Newcastle, Britain's biggest brewer, as its corporate development director.

The 37-year old has hopped between brewing jobs and the City over the last decade. Before becoming NatWest Securities' deputy managing director of UK and European Equities, he spent three years with Burton on Trent brewers Marston Thompson and Evershed, the makers of Marston's Pedigree and other fine ales. Before that he was a brewing analyst at NatWest.

There is only one thing on Mr Dunsmore's mind at the moment, though: Can Oxford United win promotion from the Second to the First Division on Saturday by beating Peterborough?



Not so rosy: Mr Robinson leaves his colleague an epithet

The *Financial Times* had an intriguing headline on page 26 yesterday: "PowerGen is threatened with MCC referral." Howzat!

More musical chairs as Philip Kendall leaves Samuel Montagu after 12 years in its corporate finance department. He is reputedly receiving a handsome package, even by City standards, from his new employers, accountants Coopers & Lybrand.

He will head Coopers' public company advisory practice. Presumably the bean-counters have to pay over the odds, since their drive to break into mainstream corporate finance is expected by the City to be a damp squib, although this may just be sour grapes.

Mr Kendall, 48, owns a large pile in Northamptonshire and is mad about Jaguar cars. A former colleague at Samuel Montagu mused yesterday: "I don't believe Coopers' car scheme will be providing him with the new Jaguar XK8".

SBC Warburg suffered another embarrassing defection from its corporate finance department yesterday when Hugh Scott-Barrett resigned as head of its power sector team to join ABN Amro Hoare Govett. The 37-year-old will become chief executive of ABN's European Corporate Finance business, concentrating on cross-border mergers – after he has finished two months' gardening leave first. "He'll be a bigger fish in a smaller pond," one former colleague remarked of the popular racehorse owner. While the papers have been full recently of former Warburg corporate financiers leaving in disgust at perceived Swiss heavy-handedness, Mr Scott-Barrett is an SBC man. Having been there 10 years, he was second in command to Rudi Bogni when last year's merger occurred.

SBC Warburg denied his departure would damage any of its power and utility deals – the bank is advising Southern Company of the US, for example. "We've got very capable guys running these things," an SBC Warburg spokesman said. "This isn't part of a bigger problem or haemorrhage of staff."

Kirk quits Iceland to join Peacock's ahead of float

NIGEL COPE

Richard Kirk has resigned from his high-profile role as managing director of Iceland, the frozen foods group, to join Peacock's, a family-run clothing retailer that harbours plans to float on the stock market. Mr Kirk will become chief executive and the company expects to float within two years.

Peacock's was founded in Warrington in the 1880s when it traded as Peacock's Penny Bazaars. The company now has 142 shops that offer value-for-money clothing and household textiles. It also runs 60 branches of Millett's the camping and outdoor clothing retailer which it acquired in 1991.

Mr Kirk said: "It's a great opportunity. The company has had its ups and downs but since it started expanding business has really been exceptional."

He added that the management had considered other options such as a trade sale but opted for a flotation.

Robert Peacock, chairman, and Hugh Child, managing director, own 80 per cent of the shares and there are no other family members in management positions. Venture capital funds hold most of the remaining shares.

Mr Kirk became a non-executive of Peacock's a year ago. It is thought that he will be buying some shares and will have options over others.

Peacock's plans to open at least 25 new stores this year and opened its first store in Northern Ireland in March. Many are concentrated in the South-west but more have been opening in London recently.

Mr Kirk said the funds raised from the stock market listing would help back the expansion plans as well as releasing capital for the shareholders.

Peacock's was founded by Albert Peacock who traded from small market stores. Shortly before the war the business moved to Cardiff under his son, Harold. Peacock's has annual sales of £85m and employs 2,500 staff. Its accounts for the year to March are currently being completed.

Mr Kirk, 50, joined Iceland from Woolworth's in 1978 and was appointed managing director last year. Iceland said he would receive no compensation and would not be replaced. His responsibilities will be assumed by other directors, the company said.

Mr Kirk received a total of £255,000 last year, plus a pension contribution of £207,000. He also holds more than 400,000 Iceland shares which, at yesterday's price of 152p, were worth £643,000.

Iceland was part of Sir David Alliance's consortium which failed in its £1.1bn bid to acquire the Littlewoods empire last year. Under that plan Iceland would have taken control of Littlewoods' high street stores and N Brown, Sir David's mail-order firm, would have retained the catalogue business.

From food to clothes: Richard Kirk will not be replaced

IN BRIEF

• **Mulberry**, the manufacturer of leather bags and other accessories that said recently it was planning an Alternative Investment Market flotation later this month, has signed an exclusive distribution agreement with Moonbat, one of Japan's largest fashion accessories companies. Moonbat plans to build a 2,000 sq ft flagship store in the fashionable Yurakucho district of Tokyo, followed by a further 20 retail outlets over the next three years.

• **Innovations Group**, the catalogue retailer, said yesterday it was in preliminary talks with its executive directors to take the company private. The group, which said it was responding to the recent upward surge in its share price, stressed that no proposal had been received.

• **Danka Business Systems**, the aquisitive photocopier distributor hopes to double its share of the UK photocopier market to 12 per cent within the next two to three years. The company is also expanding in Continental Europe and hopes to add further deals to last October's £109m acquisition of Infotec Europe, one of Europe's largest fax and photocopier groups. Danka increased its pre-tax profits by 34 per cent to £61m on sales of £793m. Stripping out acquisitions, the company achieved organic sales growth of 11 per cent. The dividend was increased by 20 per cent to 2.16p.

• **Bunzl**, the printing, paper and packaging group, has paid £26.5m for Alpha Supplies, a cleaning and hygiene supplies distributor. Alpha Supplies, which has been acquired from its existing management and a group of venture capitalists, made operating profits of £3.5m last year.

• **Central Motor Auctions**, a quoted company with six car-auction centres, has accepted an 87p per share offer from Independent Car Auctions, a newly formed holding company. The deal values CMA at £11.9m. Central Motor Auctions achieved profits of £116,000 on sales of £12m last year.

• **Thomas Jourdan**, the company that makes the Corby trouser press, returned to the black last year, making profits of £232,000 compared with previous losses of £3.5m. Operating profits were static due to continuing difficulties at the UGB business, which supplies the DIY market, and rising raw material prices. Corby is due to launch a range of travel and clothes-care items later this year.

• **Imry Holdings**, the property group, has teamed up with Rank Leisure to develop a £25m leisure development next to the company's retail park on the West Quay site in Southampton. The development will include a 12 screen cinema, a "Hotshots" sports bar, a tenpin bowling centre, two nightclubs, and a selection of restuarants. Work is expected to start this summer and be completed by Easter 1997.

• **Carr's Milling**, the Carlisle-based agriculture and milling group, increased profits by 15 per cent to £1.5m last year. The company said the BSE scare should not adversely affect the group's agriculture business, which supplies cattle feed to farmers. Earlier this month Carr's Milling appointed David Newton, chief executive of Hillsdown Holdings, as a non-executive director.

• **Admiral**, the computer services group, said at its annual meeting that 1996 had begun well, adding that approval had been received from the French authorities for the planned purchase of French computer group Areas. The company said staff numbers had increased by 291 to 1,390 since the start of the year.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
BAT (Q1)	5.86bn (5.64bn)	600m (516m)	11.6p (9.9p)	nil (-)
Carr's Milling (I)	42.4m (39.3m)	1.5m (1.3m)	14.4p (12.9p)	2.5p (2.0p)
Danka Business (F)	250m (151m)	53.9m (45.4m)	19p (16.8p)	2.16p (1p)
Hydro Intl (F)	2.29m (5.34m)	-2.2m (0.48m)	-14.255p (3.83p)	nil (-)
MMT Computing (I)	8.25m (6.42m)	2.37m (1.39m)	13p (7.4p)	2.7p (1.8p)
Sage Group (I)	71.8m (50.6m)	16.1m (11.7m)	9.92p (7.46p)	0.88p (0.88p)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim (M) - Nine months

Lenders increase forecasts as house prices rise

NIC CICUTTI

Halifax Building Society is set to more than double its own forecast for house price rises for the remainder of this year, from 2 per cent up to 5 per cent.

The society is due today to announce that its house price index rose by up to 1 per cent in April, marking the ninth consecutive monthly increase. Fresh signs of a gradual recovery in the UK property market were underpinned yesterday by Nationwide Building Society, which said its own house price index improved by 1.2 per cent last month.

The increase takes house prices to an 18-month high after the collapse faced by the market for most of last year. Over a 12-month period, prices were 1.2 per cent higher.

Philip Williamson, corporate development director at Nationwide, said yesterday: "This month's rise represents a continuation of the positive trend that began last summer.

"Estate agents' reports show increased interest from buyers in most areas of the country, although a shortage of good quality property is holding back a potential increase in activity. Prices reflect stronger demand for those desirable properties that do come onto the market."

Mr Williamson added that subdued levels of sales were still evident from statistics issued last week by the Inland Revenue, which showed that the number of transactions in March were pinned at about 90,000, similar to previous months.

He added: "More timely data such as new mortgage approvals are showing a slightly stronger increase in activity but, never the less, gains remain modest."

Ian Shepherdson, UK economist at HSBC, admitted yesterday that although new mortgage approvals had reversed the catastrophic falls last year, there had been little real progress.

He claimed the March figures may have been influenced by the increase in fixed rates.

"The slowdown in mortgage demand means the recent strength in house prices almost certainly cannot last," he added.

Cigarette growth boosts BAT

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Strong growth in world cigarette sales and a one-off disposal profit helped BAT to a 16 per cent rise in first-quarter profits.

The tobacco and financial services group's shares rose 7.5p to 510p as a result but remained well below the level at which they traded before a landmark legal settlement shattered investor confidence in the cigarette industry earlier this year.

BAT said at its annual meeting last week that it had spent £38m fighting tobacco-related legal cases last year. Yesterday it confirmed that it had "got used to heavy legal costs" as just another part of doing business in the US.

Lord Cairns, chairman, added: "It must be all too easy for shareholders to lose sight of our business successes in the face of all the adverse publicity generated by the highly vocal anti-smoking movement. Despite their claims, nothing has really changed. We will maintain our policy of vigorously defending the opportunistic cases being brought against us."

In focus: Lord Cairns says growth should be steady

Despite the cost of defending tobacco-related litigation, profits from tobacco trading rose 9 per cent to £358m, even compared with last year's strong first quarter. Returns were boosted by a 4 per cent rise in cigarette volumes and a 6 per cent rise in exports.

The continued strength of the cigarette arm boosted group profits at BAT from £516m to £600m. Excluding a £34m profit from the sale of the Chilean Malloa food operations, discarded as part of the group's focus on the core tobacco and financial services operations, profits rose 10 per cent.

Less spectacular was a 2 per cent increase in financial services trading profit to £255m, comprising a £139m contribution from general insurance and £116m from life and investment operations. Farmers in the US was a strong contributor to profits and, while underwriting results deteriorated, thanks partly to bad weather, there were encouraging signs for the life industry.

The company said competition in the UK general market remained intense and there had also been a marked deterioration in the underwriting result. Eagle Star Direct, however, continued to grow, reflecting the group's attention to developing its direct distribution channels.

Lord Cairns warned that last year's strong performance would not be repeated: "As I said at the agm, in terms of the year as a whole, the board does not expect last year's exceptional 26 per cent growth to continue. We do, however, anticipate making steady progress."

acceptance and surgery.

"It was like coming home," she said. "When I realised that

behaviour of the school directors breached the 1976 Euro-

that the Government

have to amend legislation.

birth certificates and passports.

هكذا من الاصل

DATA BANK

FT-SE 100
3806.0 -11.9

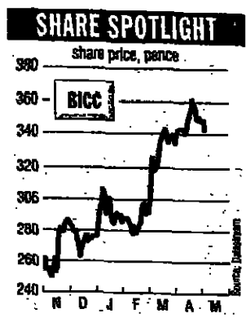
FT-SE 250
4540.1 -11.7

FT-SE 350
1925.9 -5.8

SEAQ VOLUME
810m shares,
32,331 bargains

Gilts Index
92.46 -0.11

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



Bearish trading statements add to the anxiety

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

Cautious trading statements helped undermine an already wary stock market. Sudden anxiety about tomorrow's US payroll figures, which have a reputation for wrong-footing New York, and the outcome of today's elections was already weighing heavily on sentiment when the bearish trading comments became known.

General Accident was the heavyweight casualty. It told shareholders trading was running at "a significantly lower level" than a year ago. The shares fell 18p before rallying to end 7p down at 625p.

Courtaulds Textiles was cut 45p to 373p after a profit warning, which prompted NatWest Securities to cut £9m from its forecast. It now expects £38m; last year CT made £36.5m, down from £47.3m.

Eurodis Electron, the electrical distributor, also contributed to the gloom. It produced a less than encouraging trading statement as Elektrowatt, the Swiss group, acknowledged it had been unable to find a buyer for its shareholding and had decided to place 40.32 per cent through UBS. Eurodis slumped 49p to 233p.

The market was confused by Elektrowatt's comment that the placing "is conditional on our price expectations being met". UBS had not printed details of the placing, presumably uncompleted, when the market closed.

The shares have experienced a roller-coaster ride since Elektrowatt, in an abrupt policy switch, decided to pay £1bn for Landis & Gyr, an electronics group, and sell peripheral interests to help meet the cost.

It managed to unload a near 30 per cent interest in Unitech to Siebe, the engineer, which went on mount a £520m bid.

But although it has been in talks with potential bidders Elektrowatt, controlled by Credit Suisse, has finally had to resort to a placing. The market had talked of the Swiss sale prompting a 360p-a-share offer and the shares touched 312p earlier this year.

BICC, the cable and construction group, also scattered a little uncertainty around. It has held analysts' meetings and Société Générale Strauss Turnbull put a sell sign over the shares, although ABN Amro Hoare Govett is more positive. The price fell 5p to 342p.

The failure of any of the long-mooted takeover bids to appear also took its toll, with National Power, Ladbroke and Thorn EMI pulled lower.

The FT-SE 100 index ended 11.9 points down at 3,806.0 and the supporting index, for long so buoyant, fell a further 11.7 to 4,540.1.

National Westminster Bank gained 7.5p to 619.5p as hopes revived of a share buy-back or special dividend. **Rentokil** was up 5.5p to 388p on further US buying following its BET success.

SmithKline Beecham continued to advance, up 13p to 717.5p. The shares have climbed 60p since last month's marginally better than expected figures. There is talk that it is gearing up for a big takeover exercise, with a US group likely to be the target. It is thought to have met analysts this week and is expected to get approval from the US Food and Drug Administration for a heart treatment.

Glaxo Wellcome, up 12p to 818p, was again helped by FDA clearance of a new anaesthetic, and **Smith & Nephew** drew further strength from its skin-growing alliance, up 1.75p to 195p.

Lloyds Chemists fell 4p to 465p as Marilyn Lloyd, wife of chairman Allen Lloyd, sold 3 million shares at 450p.

Lucas Industries fell back further after its recent run, losing 2p to 213p. Some are wondering whether the group, seeking a chief executive to replace George Simpson, will contemplate a merger with T&N.

The day's best performer was Liverpool-based stockbroker **Neilson Cobbold**, which duly confirmed a takeover approach – from Rathbone Brothers, the financial group. Neilson surged 95p to 365p.

MMT Computing, with a 71 per cent interim profit advance, jumped 86p to 458p, and **Celtic Football Club**, a notoriously thin market, gained 3,000p to 17,500p.

Chelsea Village fell 3p to 55p on the likelihood that Chelsea manager Glenn Hoddle will take the England hot seat, and **Central Motor**, a car auction business, put on 15p to 85p following an 87p-a-share bid from a company owned by Independent Car Auctions of Bristol and Manheim Auctions of the US.

Innovations fell 3p to 189p, after touching 206p. The catalogue retailer may be taken private.

Flomerics, a specialist software group, held at 215p. Managed Technology Investors, a venture capital house, sold most of its 40.3 per cent stake to institutions at 200p.

TAKING STOCK

❑ **MSB International, a computer group, looks set for a heady debut today. The shares were placed at 190p but could top 220p when trading gets under way. The group, operating mainly in the South-east, has increased profits more than sixfold in the past two years.**

❑ **Cambridge Mineral Resources, seeking diamonds and sapphires in Ireland, Scandinavia and Spain, is expected to arrive on Ofex, the fringe share market, in July. The company has raised £250,000 through a private share placing.**

❑ **TBI, a property development and investment group, gained 3p to 72.5p in, for the second day running, busy trading. It has sold a leisure complex at Stevenage for what appears to be an attractive price. Buyer is Norwich Union.**

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.
Other details: xr Ex rights x Ex-dividend xa Ex all u Unlisted Securities Market s Suspended pp Partly Paid pm Nil Paid Shares.
Source: Finstat.

The Independent Index

The Index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from Seaq. Simply dial 0891 123 335, followed by the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 1233 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

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Calls cost 39p per minute (cheap rate), and 49p at all other times. Call charges include VAT

Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000
British Gas	1400000	BET	970000	Vodafone	790000	National Grid	650000
Rentokil	1300000	GRE	860000	ASDA Group	780000	Sun Alliance	650000
BTR	1200000	Lloyds TSB	840000	Cookson	720000	Glaxo Wellcome	680000
Rolls Royce	1000000	Hanson	800000	Wales & Spencer	700000	Rank Org	620000
BP	1000000	Smith & Nephew	800000	NatWest Bank	670000	BAT Inds	600000

FT-SE 100 Index hour by hour

Open 3817.2 down 0.7	11.00 3808.1 down 9.8	14.00 3810.5 down 7.3
09.00 3808.5 down 9.4	12.00 3808.1 down 11.8	15.00 3803.4 down 14.5
10.00 3808.9 down 9.0	13.00 3807.3 down 10.8	16.00 3809.2 down 11.7
		Close 3806.0 down 11.9

Banks, Merchant

1996 High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Index Code
482	424	Cater Allen	441	+8	3.6	23	3081
392	316	Close Bros	385	+8	3.9	13	2368
472	386	GerrardNat	395		2.1	12	2694
232	189	Hambros	227	-2	3.9	13	2912
65	143	King & Shaxson	156		1.2	12	3088
453	448	Leopold J	450		5.2	15.5	3080
66	58	Rea Bros	58	-2	2.2	225	3765
380	185	Schroders	1030	x15	1.5	19	3200
16½	9½	Singer &Fried	15	x+4	4.3	12	4028
106	86½	Union	96	-2	3.9		4353
305	268	Wintrust	300		4.9	12.2	4524

Banks, Retail

1996 High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Index Code
14½	12½	ABN Amro	134xr	+½		40	116
663	529	Abbey Nat	562	+7	4.8	108	5481
385	322	Ald Irish	350	+1	4.9	102	1354
89	56½	Anglo Irish	64		4.8	108	1355
885	739½	Ascot	845	-7	0.5		3049
336	279	Aus NZ	316	-1	5.5		
7½	4¾	Bancaire Cp	7 13/16	+⅛		18	2202
12½	10½	Banco Bilbao	12 5/16xr	+⅛		38	
32½	24½	Banco de Sntd	30 1/16	-1 1/16		12	
819	683	Barclays Bk	739	+4.5	4.4	17	1754
52½	38½	Bk America	50 5/16xr		2.9		1941
488	422	Bk Ireland	477	-2	3.6	16	1350
395	338½	Bk of Scotl	344½	-5	3.6	14	1382
15½	10½	Bk Tokyo Mts	12 5/16	-⅛	0.4		
10½	11½	Dai-ichi K	10 ⅝	-⅛	0.4		
34½	29½	Deutsche Bk	33 1/16	-⅝	2.2		
9½	5½	Esp Santo	7 3/16	-1/16		12	1487
1¼	1½	Fuji Bank	1 1/16	-2½	0.4		
1029	700	HSBC (HK)	985	+1	4.1	10.5	2786
1125	948	HSBC Hldgs	1098	+2	4.1	10.5	2778
744½	634½	Lloyds TSB	741	-4½	5.1	13.4	4320
10½	9½	Mitsubishi Tst	10 1/16	-⅛	0.4	20.5	
640	476	Nat Aus Bk	568	+3	7.3	7.8	
791	608	Nat West	619	+7	5.1	8.7	3463
506	443	Rel Bk Scot	509	-10	4.0	15	3694
8½	6½	Sakura Bank	7½		0.7	42.5	
862½	645	Stan Chartrd	693	+9	2.2	13.4	4094
11½	8½	Sumitomo Bk	10 1/16xr	-⅛		04	
429	354	Westpac	362½	-1	4.6		

Breweries, Pubs & Rest

1996 High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Index Code
368	303	Ascot Hldgs	350			07	2365
74½	72	Bass	783	-1	3.6	18	1772
177	155	Burton Wood	168		4.1	13	3022
721	612	City Cir Rst	717		0.4		1728
463	403	Compass	542	-5	1.7	23.9	2463
370	180	Enterprise P	257	u-1	2.2	237	3435
493	413	Fuller Smith	488	u-	2.2	133	2943
340	317	Gibbs Mew	320		3.7	17	2368
633	554	Greenalls Gp	620	+6	2.8	12.2	2768
935	804	Greene King	889	-1	2.8	13.9	2369
278	234	Grosvenor Inns	261		2.8	25.6	2298
254	204	Group Chez Gér	222	x7		14	2225
357	300	Hardys & H	352		4.0	16	2533
3475	3035	Holt Lt	3375		2.1		2912
55	45	Inn Business	54				
348	303	Mansfield	347	+2	1.9	17.4	3382
347	310	Marston T	348	-1	2.8	16.4	3309
573	515	Morland	568	-2	2.2	17	3481
5½	4½	Pacemaker	5 1/16				
15½	13½	Pelican	13½	-1	3.5	12.6	2429
15½	12½	Pizza Express	15½	-⅛	0.8	38.9	4229
364½	245	Ransdens (JH)	354½	+9½		7.1	3000
1030	848	Regent Inns	1025	-5	1.0	32.2	2740
700	601	Scot/Nwc B	685	-3	3.4	15.3	3944
258	205	Tom Cobleigh	216		1.8	20.8	1944
320	268	Vaux Group	300		4.2	19.1	4382
203	168	Wetherspoon JD	190	+1½	1.2	31.1	1768
577	457	Whitbread	768	-1	1.4	23.9	2368
678	578	Wolv'h Dudley	678	+10	2.8	15.4	4530
482½	342	Yates Bros	404	+2	1.9	26.9	4652
165½	125	Young Bew A	165		3.4	22.5	4658
340	307	Young Bew N	310		3.7	20.7	4564

Building/Construction

1996 High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Index Code
57	32	AMEC	116				2353
135	105	Abbey	125		3.7	13	1653
275	215	Alum	231	-1	2.7	20.8	4946
270	215	Andrews Sls	235	+1	1.7		9305
200	160	Ashtead	190		1.7	16.5	1935
40	30	Avonside	38		3.9		1439
52	39	Tarmac Homes	47		1.8	15.6	1749
34	24	Bennim	31		0.9		1497
219	179	Burrell Dev	203	+6½	3.9	13.2	1736
340	196	Bryant Homes	204		2.4	9.5	3532
344	275	Bellway	325	-3	2.9	13	1799
17	7	Bellwinch	10				1000
168	143	Berkeley	157	-1	1.8	12.2	1933
153	140	Bett Bros. 20p	140		4.6	50	1922
88½	73½	Blue	85				3049
336	279	Aus NZ	316	-1	5.5		
78½	63½	Bunclaw Cp	77½	+½		18	2202
32½	22½	Bunco Bilbao	25 5/16xr		3.8		
32½	24½	Banco de Snt	30 1/16	-1 1/16		12	
819	683	Barclays Bk	739	+4.5	4.4	17	1754
52½	38½	Bk America	50 5/16xr		2.9		1941
488	422	Bk Ireland	477	-2	3.6	16	1350
395	338½	Bk of Scotl	344½	-5	3.6	14	1382
15½	10½	Bk Tokyo Mts	12 5/16	-⅛	0.4		
10½	11½	Dai-ichi K	10 ⅝	-⅛	0.4		
34½	29½	Deutsche Bk	33 1/16	-⅝	2.2		
9½	5½	Esp Santo	7 3/16	-1/16		12	1487
1½	1½	Fuji Bank	1 1/16	-2½	0.4		
1029	700	HSBC (HK)	985	+1	4.1	10.5	2786
1125	948	HSBC Hldgs	1098	+2	4.1	10.5	2778
744½	634½	Lloyds TSB	741	-4½	5.1	13.4	4320
10½	9½	Mitsubishi Tst	10 1/16	-⅛	0.4	20.5	
640	476	Nat Aus Bk	568	+3	7.3	7.8	
791	608	Nat West	619	+7	5.1	8.7	3463
506	443	Rel Bk Scot	509	-10	4.0	15	3694
8½	6½	Sakura Bank	7½		0.7	42.5	
862½	645	Stan Chartrd	693	+9	2.2	13.4	4094
11½	8½	Sumitomo Bk	10 1/16xr	-⅛		04	
429	354	Westpac	362½	-1	4.6		

Breweries, Pubs & Rest

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721	612	City Cir Rst	717		0.4		1728
463	403	Compass	542	-5	1.7	23.9	2463
370	180	Enterprise P	257	u-1	2.2	237	3435
493	413	Fuller Smith	488	u-	2.2	133	2943
340	317	Gibbs Mew	320		3.7	17	2368
633	554	Greenalls Gp	620	+6	2.8	12.2	2768
935	804	Greene King	889	-1	2.8	13.9	2369
278	234	Grosvenor Inns	261		2.8	25.6	2298
254	204	Group Chez Gér	222	x7		14	2225
357	300	Hardys & H	352		4.0	16	2533
3475	3035	Holt Lt	3375		2.1		2912
55	45	Inn Business	54				
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573	515	Morland	568	-2	2.2	17	3481
5½	4½	Pacemaker	5 1/16				
15½	13½	Pelican	13½	-1	3.5	12.6	2429
15½	12½	Pizza Express	15½	-⅛	0.8	38.9	4229
364½	245	Ransdens (JH)	354½	+9½		7.1	3000
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700	601	Scot/Nwc B	685	-3	3.4	15.3	3944
258	205	Tom Cobleigh	216		1.8	20.8	1944
320	268	Vaux Group	300		4.2	19.1	4382
203	168	Wetherspoon JD	190	+1½	1.2	31.1	1768
577	457	Whitbread	768	-1	1.4	23.9	2368
678	578	Wolv'h Dudley	678	+10	2.8	15.4	4530
482½	342	Yates Bros	404	+2	1.9	26.9	4652
165½	125	Young Bew A	165		3.4	22.5	4658
340	307	Young Bew N	310		3.7	20.7	4564

Building/Construction

1996 High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Index Code
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135	105	Abbey	125		3.7	13	1653
275	215	Alum	231	-1	2.7	20.8	4946
270	215	Andrews Sls	235	+1	1.7		9305
200	160	Ashtead	190		1.7	16.5	1935
40	30	Avonside	38		3.9		1439
52	39	Tarmac Homes	47		1.8	15.6	1749
34	24	Bennim	31		0.9		1497
219	179	Burrell Dev	203	+6½	3.9	13.2	1736
340	196	Bryant Homes	204		2.4	9.5	3532
344	275	Bellway	325	-3	2.9	13	1799
17	7	Bellwinch	10				1000
168	143	Berkeley	157	-1	1.8	12.2	1933
153	140	Bett Bros. 20p	140		4.6	50	1922
88½	73½	Blue	85				3049
336	279	Aus NZ	316	-1	5.5		
78½	63½	Bunclaw Cp	77½	+½		18	2202
32½	22½	Bunco Bilbao	25 5/16xr		3.8		
32½	24½	Banco de Snt	30 1/16	-1 1/16		12	
819	683	Barclays Bk	739	+4.5	4.4	17	1754
52½	38½	Bk America	50 5/16xr		2.9		1941
488	422	Bk Ireland	477	-2	3.6	16	1350
395	338½	Bk of Scotl	344½	-5	3.6	14	1382
15½	10½	Bk Tokyo Mts	12 5/16	-⅛	0.4		
10½	11½	Dai-ichi K	10 ⅝	-⅛	0.4		
34½	29½	Deutsche Bk	33 1/16	-⅝	2.2		
9½	5½	Esp Santo	7 3/16	-1/16		12	1487
1½	1½	Fuji Bank	1 1/16	-2½	0.4		
1029	700	HSBC (HK)	985	+1	4.1	10.5	2786
1125	948	HSBC Hldgs	1098	+2	4.1	10.5	2778
744½	634½	Lloyds TSB	741	-4½	5.1	13.4	4320
10½	9½	Mitsubishi Tst	10 1/16	-⅛	0.4	20.5	
640	476	Nat Aus Bk	568	+3	7.3	7.8	
791	608	Nat West	619	+7	5.1	8.7	3463
506	443	Rel Bk Scot	509	-10	4.0	15	3694
8½	6½	Sakura Bank	7½		0.7	42.5	
862½	645	Stan Chartrd	693	+9	2.2	13.4	4094
11½	8½	Sumitomo Bk	10 1/16xr	-⅛		04	
429	354	Westpac	362½	-1	4.6		

Chemicals

1996 High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Index Code
135	105	Albright & Wil	115	+1	4.8	20.3	1574
115	105	Ald Colloid	110		4.7	13.4	1724
245	185	Amber Inc	190		3.7	13.4	1724
1010	872	BOC	990	+3	3.8	17.2	1970
330	235	BTP	270	+3	3.8	29	1932
10½	7½	Brent Int	10				1040
218	185	Bti Vita	205		4.8	19.8	1957
275	195	CeringWR	208	+1½	3.8	18.5	2553
633	554	Courtaulds	428	-3	4.6	14.5	2768
335	301	Croda	344	-3	3.4	18.6	2276
250	208	Deeks	248		3.4	24	2369
275	215	Dis &Chem	240		3.7	18	2362
91	78	Lon&Cntr Cp	83			3.7	2002
83	70	Nikwin	78				2000
106	102	Holiday	106		4.8	13.3	3000
850	750	ICI	833	+7	4.2	12.9	2002
97	81	Nalco Cp	88	x+4	4.3		2002

Building Materials

1996 High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Index Code
148	115	Aurum Cp	134	+1		23.5	1768
335	284	BPB Ind	314	+1	3.5	15.7	1768
1175	1000	Blagdon Gp	1140		3.5	15.7	1768
1000	800	Bardon	950	+5½		15.7	1768
65	50	Blue Circle	65	+1½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Blue Arrow	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Nor Cntr	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Rep Of Ch Pt	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Brett Ld	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Dev Comparing	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	CRH	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Cmt	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Cape	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Caradon	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Ennis	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Hanson	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Heywood	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Hoveton	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Huyvers W	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Ibstock	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Lafarge	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Lilleshall	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Marley	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Marshalls	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Meyer Int	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Needler Int	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Newman Tonks	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Norcros	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Pilkington	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Redland	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Rexam	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Rugby Cm	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Ruskin A	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Sherm & F	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Steetley	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Strong Pkrn	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Tarmac	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Tilon	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Travis Perkin	950	+5½		15.7	1768
1000	800	Wolseley	950	+5½		15.7	1768

Chemicals

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250	208	Deeks	248		3.4	24	2369
275	215	Dis &Chem	240		3.7	18	2362
91	78	Lon&Cntr Cp	83			3.7	2002
83	70	Nikwin	78				2000
106	102	Holiday	106		4.8	13.3	3000
850	750	ICI	833	+7	4.2	12.9	2002
97	81	Nalco Cp	88	x+4	4.3		2002

Diversified Industrials

1996 High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Index Code
0¼	0½	Anglo United	0½				155
388	286	Anglogate	346		1.9	16	1699
585	477	BAT Inds	507	x+4½	6.9	10.5	1717
240	183	BTR	235½	x+1½	3.9	32	2000
216	181	Bunzl	215	+1	1.7	20.8	1909
122	73	Burford	116		1.7	20.8	1909
125	91	Bibby Lt	120		6.0	17	1823
1½	1½	Bunley	1½				1000
1½	1½	Cookson	1½				1000
1½	1½	Dalgety	1½				1000
1½	1½	Dobson Int	1½				1000
1½	1½	Elkem	1½				1000
1½	1½	Fenner	1½				1000
1½	1½	Fitzwilton	1½				1000
1½	1½	Gallaher	1½				1000
1½	1½	Hanson	1½				1000
1½	1½	Hepworth	1½				1000
1½	1½	Hickson	1½				1000
1½	1½	Jacobs	1½				1000
1½	1½	Jardine M	1½				1000
1½	1½	Johnson M	1½				1000
1½	1½	Lucas	1½				1000
1½	1½	Lyons	1½				1000
1½	1½	Meyer	1½				1000
1½	1½	Pilkington	1½				1000
1½	1½	Rank Org	1½				1000
1½	1½	Reed Int	1½				1000
1½	1½	Rolls Royce	1½				1000
1½	1½	Rothmans	1½				1000
1½	1½	Sime Darby	1½				1000
1½	1½	Slough Est	1½				1000
1½	1½	Tate & Lyle	1½				1000
1½	1½	Tomkins	1½				1000
1½	1½	Unilever	1½				1000
1½	1½	Vickers	1½				1000
1½	1½	Wagon Ind	1½				1000
1½	1½	Wassall	1½				1000
1½	1½	Williams H	1½				1000
1½	1½	Wilkinson	1½				1000

Electricity

1996 High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Index Code
737	584	East Midlands	614	-13	6.0	8.4	4294
653	543	London Elec	653	-3	5.9	10.3	4297
1000	800	Midlands	980	-10	5.9	10.3	4298
1000	800	National Grid	980	-10	5.9	10.3	4299
1000	800	Nor Wst	980	-10	5.9	10.3	4300
1000	800	Nat Power pp	980	-10	5.9	10.3	4301
1000	800	Northern	980	-10	5.9	10.3	4302
1000	800	Nthn Ireland	980	-10	5.9	10.3	4303
1000	800	PowerGen	980	-10	5.9	10.3	4304
1000	800	PowerGen pp	980	-10	5.9	10.3	4305
1000	800	Scot Hydro	980	-10	5.9	10.3	4306
1000	800	Scottish Pwr	980	-10	5.9	10.3	4307
1000	800	Seeboard	980	-10	5.9	10.3	4308

business

Industry slumps but consumer spending soars

JOHN EISENHAMMER
Financial Editor

Manufacturing industry displayed yesterday the most depressing figures since the early days of the recovery in 1992, as consumer spending powered ahead, underscoring the split personality of the British economy.

The contradictary figures leave a decision on interest rates hanging in the balance. Pointing to the growing evidence of weakness, many City economists said that when the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, next meets Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, on 8 May, the chances have increased of a further rate easing.

The outcome of today's local council elections, in which the Conservatives are expected to suffer extensive losses, will add to the political pressure on the Chancellor to fuel the feel-good factor.

"We still think interest rates are on hold as the weakness could still just be temporary, but the chances of a rate cut have increased," said Ciaran Barr at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell.

The April purchasing managers index fell to 48.3 from 49.4 the previous month, while new orders fell at the sharpest rate since September 1992, down to 47.1 compared with 49.9 in March.

The Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply said there had been no significant growth in the manufacturing economy in the past 12 months.

"It is a depressing outlook. If you take the headline figure, it is the worst since the 'green shoots' days of 1992," said Peter Thomson, CIPS director-general. Consumer goods manufacturers were the only companies reporting an upturn in production, while output of investment and intermediate goods declined.

"The survey further demonstrates the split in the UK economy, with the manufacturing sector remaining weak," said Tom Rayner of Société Générale Strauss Turnbull. "The survey shows stock levels are not running down, as was previously hoped, but are actually building up, and suggests that it will be some time before there is any positive news on the UK economy."

At the same time, the weakness of the prices component in the poor purchasing data contained further positive news on the inflation front. It recorded a new low since 1991, suggesting further falls in official producer price inflaton and ultimately retail price inflation are likely, according to Simon Briscoe of Nikko Europe.

"The overall index suggests contraction rather than expansion in the economy for the third month running. There is no chance that base rates will rise in the month ahead, so the balance of probability is now that the next move will be down," he said.

Complicating the forecasting equation, however, were consumer credit figures yesterday, which showed bank lending at its highest level in the first quarter since they were first surveyed in 1991.

Inflation fears in US as costs rise

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

A fresh batch of indicators yesterday showed the US economy was on course for another year of steady if unspectacular growth, but some economists were growing uneasy that higher commodity and petrol prices may soon push inflation higher.

The latest evidence has come from the Commerce Department, whose index of leading indicators rose 0.2 per cent in March, following its 1.3 per cent jump in February, the largest increase in 20 years.

Although the rise was less than the 0.3 per cent expected by Wall Street, it gives the lie to fears circulating in late 1995 that the economy was heading for a serious slowdown – possibly even a recession. Most predictions are of 2 per cent growth in GDP in 1996, around the same as last year.

In a separate report yesterday, the department said spending on new private and public building projects soared by 3.1 per cent in March, the biggest such single-month increase since early 1992. The burst of activity, though a rebound from January and February when bad weather had a serious impact, caught analysts by suprise.

Separately, the Conference Board business research group reported that its closely watched index of consumer confidence jumped to 105.3 in April from 98.4 the previous month. The index has not been that high for six years, shortly before the 1990/91 recession, and the increase shows that public worry about jobs and corporate downsizing is receding.

If anything now the worry here is over renewed inflation, fuelled by increases in commodity prices. Months of drought have pushed grain prices sharply higher, while petrol prices, driven by refinery stoppages, and a tight global market after the exceptionally severe winter, are 10 per cent higher than a year ago.

Premium pets: Denis Loretto, a director at Cornhill and chairman of the new Pet Plan board, with Patsy Bloom yesterday Photograph: Bill Johnston Photos

Cornhill buys Pet Plan for £32.5m

NIC CICUTTI and NIGEL COPE

Patsy Bloom and David Simpson have made a spectacular 64,900 per cent return on the £500 they originally invested in starting Pet Plan 20 years ago. The business, now the UK's largest pet insurance company, was yesterday sold to Cornhill Insurance for £32.5m.

The idea for the Pet Plan business came to Ms Bloom after she was hit by high vet bills for her pet dog. It has since become a kind of Bupa for pets, with policy sales of £40m last year.

Animal lovers can insure dogs, cats, even horses. Policies cover a range of accidents and illnesses including vaccinations, fractures and other treatments.

Commenting on the sale, Ms Bloom said: "I'm delighted. The company has reached the stage now when it needs really serious investment. It's the right time."

Both Ms Bloom and Mr Simpson will remain involved in the company. Mr Simpson becomes chief executive of the new Cornhill subsidiary while Ms Bloom will remain a director in charge of marketing and promotion. Ms Bloom, a former Veuve Clicquot Businesswoman of the Year, said she had no immediate plans to spend the money: "I'd like to be a lady who lunches, just for a while."

Pet Plan has seen a variety of quirky claims over the years. Recent claims include one for Rocky, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel that was frightened by a hound's noisy bark, spun into the air and fractured its elbow (claim for elbow fracture: £996.77).

A claim for a Wolfgang St Bernard was even more painful. The dog fell off a cliff onto a Devon beach, sustaining multiple fractures (claim: £1,276).

Pet Plan's staff of 200 will remain at their headquarters in Brentford, Essex. Cornhill said yesterday that there were no present plans to cut jobs at its new subsidiary.

Cornhill already provides the underwriting for Pet Plan's range of pet insurance contracts. Denis Loretto, a director at Cornhill and chairman of the new Pet Plan board, said yesterday: "We have been very pleased with the underwriting of this portfolio since the beginning of 1994 and have built up a very beneficial partnership. We look forward to achieving even greater success under the new arrangements."

Pet Plan, which provides cover for all domestic pets, now has about 400,000 policyholders. The company achieved £1m of premium income in 1983. This grew to £22m in 1992 and reached £40m last year. Last month Pet Plan launched a special credit card aimed at the UK's animal lovers.

Pet Plan has 42 per cent of the insured market, but has so far only made a minor dent among the UK's 6.8 million dogs, of which just 12 per cent are insured, and 7.2 million cats, of which just 3 per cent have cover.

Pet Plan also has 30 per cent of the insurance market among the UK's 450,000 horses.

Cornhill is part of the Allianz Group in Germany, the largest insurer in Europe. The company's gross general business premium income reached £1bn, while its pre-tax profits last year reached £73.5m, 12 per cent up on 1994.

هكذا من الأصل

EMU – the key to the crucial German question

ECONOMIC VIEW

FRANCESCO GIAVAZZI

In spite of the sceptics, EMU is sailing on. The Verona meeting of the European Union finance ministers, on 13 April, made more progress, filling in the remaining details of the single currency project. In the face of opposition from Sweden, Finland and the UK, the Ecofin Council decided that the new ERM will stabilise exchange rates in Europe until all national currencies will have ceased to exist. To accommodate national pride, it was also decided that the new currency, the euro, will bear on one side a national effigy – Christopher Columbus, Leonardo Da Vinci, Marie Curie or the Queen – while a European symbol will appear on the back. This is going a long way from just a few months ago, when the sceptics were denying that the EU would be able to agree on a name for the new currency.

Why are the sceptics constantly wrong? Some are wrong because they fail to understand that the project has much more to do with politics than with economics. Others recognise that politics is what is driving EMU, but they fail to understand the important political issues on the Continent.

The "economists" keep repeating that the Maastricht criteria – the conditions for being admitted to the single-currency club – make no economic sense, and that the treaty must be rewritten from scratch. Of course the criteria make no economic sense! But macro-economics can do very little to help you understand the treaty, as argued in a recent report from the Centre for Economic Policy Research, *Flexible Integration: Towards a More Effective and Democratic Europe**. The four criteria (on inflation, the budget deficit, interest rates and exchange rates) were the outcome of a difficult political bargain, and they have little to do with economics. They represent the conditions Germany asked for when agreeing to give up the two symbols of post-war economic stability – the mark and the *Bundesbank*.

The German question is at the centre of the political concerns on the Continent. At the end of the Second World War, when Germans were occupied in reconstructing, along with their economy, new democratic institutions, the big question for Western Europe was how to make sure that this country would not, once more, be attracted by big-power policies that would prevent it being a good citizen in Europe and might cause it to drift away again from democracy. This is no longer the concern today. The more concrete risk, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany, is that Europe, right at the time when it is making the crucial steps towards its political and economic integration, will be unable to attract Germany in this project, and will condemn itself to disintegration.

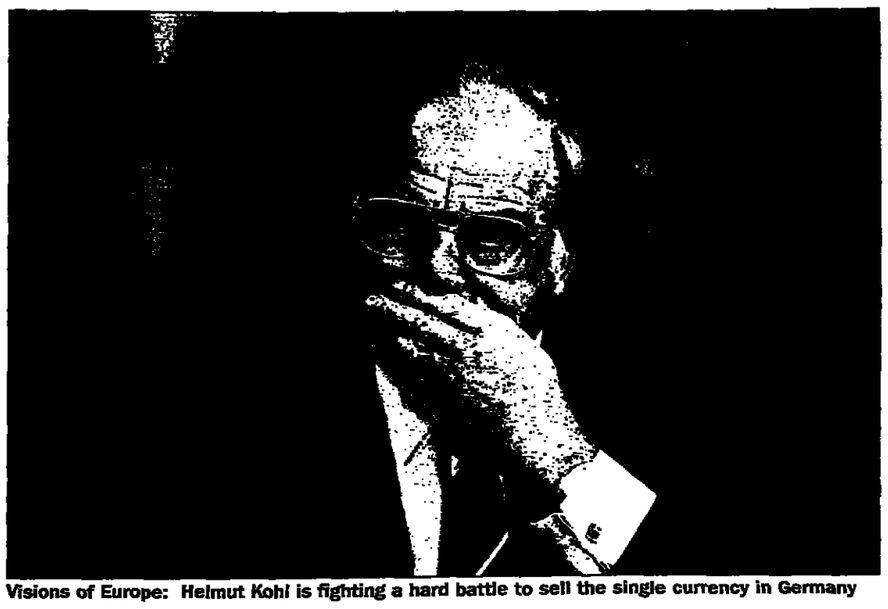
Bonn is concerned about drifting away from the core countries of Europe

Europe today – after the return to democracy of the countries east of the Elbe river – reminds one of what happened three centuries ago, at the end of the Thirty Years' War and, more recently, after the First World War. The Peace of Westphalia, in 1648, and the Treaty of Versailles, in 1919, both left a large power vacuum along the borders of the strongest states. France with Louis XIV, and Germany with Adolf Hitler used these occasions to expand their influence towards the east. These historical experiences can help in understanding the problems Europe faces today.

If the project of unifying Europe is derailed – and today the fate of this project is intimately linked with that of the single currency – in the scenario that would emerge if Europe failed to attract Germany, then Germany would rapidly and inevitably emerge as the natural attractor, both politically and economically, for a vast grouping of countries which today are already closely linked with Germany, including not only Austria and the Benelux states, but also Poland, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia and the Czech Republic. Before the Second World War the countries of central and eastern Europe had close economic links with Germany: in 1938, 30 per cent of total Hungarian imports came from Germany, 28 per cent of Romanian imports, 56 per cent of Bulgarian imports and almost 30 per cent of imports of Poland. These economic links vanished after the war but are rapidly being rebuilt. Language links – many in these countries still speak German – and the urgent need for capital goods, the speciality of German industry, have helped in rebuilding these economic links surprisingly quickly.

Compared with such an aggregation of states, likely to exert an influence that would extend beyond Europe, even France would find it hard to compete – politically and economically. Countries such as Spain and Italy would find themselves isolated, excluded from all big decisions concerning the future of the Continent, confined to the role of suppliers of low-tech parts for German industry, and to that of attractive vacation sites for rich central Europeans. In Italy the prospect of German hegemony in Europe would further exacerbate the differences between the regions in the North-east – which would integrate further in a "Europa" in which they would, however, have no political representation – and those in the Mezzogiorno. The same is likely to happen in the Catalan region relative to the rest of Spain.

This explains why France so stubbornly pursues the single-currency project, whatever the price in terms of unemployment and low growth. But Germany too is concerned by the prospect of drifting away from the countries that have been the traditional core of Europe. The battle that Chancellor Helmut Kohl is staging against the Bundesbank and those – probably a majority – among his fellow citizens who oppose giving up the mark, is inspired by a vision of Europe in which Germany is strong, probably the strongest country, but whose power is diffused in a wider political and economic community.



Visions of Europe: Helmut Kohl is fighting a hard battle to sell the single currency in Germany

In one respect the sceptics are right. EMU is not simply an economic project; it is the Trojan horse for further political integration of Europe – and one must concede that Chancellor Kohl keeps repeating that a single currency and a single central bank will not survive in the absence of stronger European political institutions. But such are the choices we confront at the end of this century. Either we accept the German offer to participate in the design, construction and administration of new political institutions for Europe – an offer that comes at some cost, especially in the short run, politically, for countries such as the UK where opposition to the single currency is still very strong, and economically, for countries such as Italy that are still far from satisfying the Maastricht criteria. Otherwise we must prepare to live in a Continent that, in any case, will dance to the tune of Germany, but where other countries will find their views much more difficult to be heard.

Francesco Giavazzi is Professor of Economics at Bocconi University in Milan and a co-director of the International Macroeconomics Programme at the Centre for Economic Policy Research, which takes no institutional policy positions.

* *"Flexible Integration: Towards a More Effective and Democratic Europe", published by CEPR, 25-28 Old Burlington Street, London W1X 1LB Tel 0171-878 2900*

Foreign Exchange Rates

	Sterling			Dollar			D-Mark
Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot
US	14965	9-7	21-18	1000	—	—	06521
Canada	20387	11-3	50-37	13623	2-1	2-0	08883
Germany	22950	53-46	159-149	15336	28-24	84-81	10000
France	77478	152-130	436-405	51773	73-66	217-207	33759
Italy	23434	75-90	221-246	15659	57-64	170-182	102109
Japan	15730	75-70	225-218	10511	45-44	136-133	685413
ECU	12216	15-11	45-40	12250	7-8	23-25	05323
Belgium	47170	12-9	34-29	31520	6-5	18-16	205529
Denmark	88458	175-133	529-436	59110	85-65	270-220	38543
Netherlands	25664	68-59	197-184	17149	35-32	107-102	11162
Ireland	09641	10-6	24-18	15523	4-7	12-17	04201
Norway	98530	116-64	329-233	65841	42-17	110-60	42932
Spain	19072	26-36	72-89	12744	23-27	64-72	831019
Sweden	10239	9-15	23-34	68423	98-123	260-310	44616
Switzerland	18684	66-58	196-184	12485	37-34	113-107	08141
Australia*	18964	20-31	67-85	12671	19-21	54-58	08262
Hong Kong	11577	101-61	224-170	77361	2-12	15-35	50444
Malaysia	37300	0-0	0-0	24925	4-14	60-80	16253
New Zealand*	21836	43-57	133-156	14590	30-32	88-90	09514
Saudi Arabia	56121	0-0	0-0	37502	2-7	9-14	24454
Singapore	21044	0-0	0-0	14062	41-30	103-88	09169

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	14913	09962	Nigeria	126197	843000
Austria	161457	107890	Oman	05763	03850
Brazil	14855	09923	Pakistan	519688	347153
China	124702	83301	Philippines	392064	261900
Egypt	50963	34068	Portugal	235175	157150
Finland	72766	48608	Qatar	54480	36417
Ghana	238911	159700	Russia	743410	496600
Greece	365852	244390	South Africa	64885	43350
India	518538	348500	Taiwan	406780	271730
Kuwait	04490	02999	UAE	54982	36728

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount: subtract from spot rate
rate quoted low to high are at a premium: add to spot rate
*Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals.
For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 123 3033.
Calls cost 36p per minute (cheap rate) 48p other times.

Interest Rates

UK		Germany		US		Japan	
Base	600%	Discount	250%	Prime	875%	Discount	050%
France		Lombard	450%	Discount	500%	Belgium	
Intervention	370%	Canada		Fed Funds	525%	Discount	250%
Italy		Prime	700%	Spain		Central	330%
Discount	900%	Discount	500%	10-Day Repo	775%	Switzerland	
Netherlands		Denmark		Sweden		Discount	150%
Advances	270%	Discount	325%	Repo (Ave)	690%	Lombard	4125%

Bond Yields

HSBC Markets Research

Country	5yr	yield %	10yr	yield %	Country	5yr	yield %	10yr	yield %
UK	800%	738	8¾%	799	Netherlands	9%	531	6%	631
US	5¾%	638	5⅞%	665	Spain	10¼%	846	1015%	814
Japan	64%	224	3⅛%	335	Italy	10½%	922	10½%	981
Australia	8¾%	842	10%	874	Belgium	7¼%	541	6½%	662
Germany	5¾%	529	6%	638	Sweden	11%	751	6%	820
France	5⅞%	549	7¼%	641	ECU OAT	9½%	571	7½%	642

Yields calculated on local basis. †new benchmark

Money Market Rates

	O'Night		7 Day		1 Month		3		6 Months		1 Year	
Interbank	5	6¾	5⅞	6⅛	5⅞	6⅛	6	6⅛	6⅛	6¼	6¼	6⅛
Sterling CDs	-		-		6		6		6½		6½	
Local Authority Deps	5¾		5¾		5⅞		5⅞		6		6¼	
Discount Market Deps	6¾		6⅛		-		-		-		-	
Treasury Bills (Buy)	-		-		5⅞		5⅞		-		-	
Dollar CDs	-		-		513		512		524		555	
ECU Linked Dep	-	-	-	-	4¾	4¾	4⅞	4⅞	4⅞	4⅞	4⅞	4⅞

Tourist Rates

£ Buys		£ Buys		£ Buys	
Australia(Dollars)	18450	France(Francs)	75300	New Zealand(Dollars)	21825
Austria(Schillings)	157300	Germany(Marks)	22360	Norway(Kroner)	98500
Belgium(Francs)	459000	Greece(Drachma)	3575000	Portugal(Escudos)	2300000
Canada(Dollars)	20000	Hong Kong(Dollars)	114400	Spain(Pesetas)	1855000
Cyprus(Pounds)	06920	Ireland(Punts)	09375	Sweden(Kronor)	100900
Denmark(Kroner)	86900	Italy(Lira)	23050000	Switzerland(Francs)	18075
Holland(Guilders)	25050	Japan(Yen)	1562500	Turkey(Lira)	1075870000
Finland(Marks)	72475	Malta(Lira)	05350	United States(Dollars)	14700

Liffe Financial Futures

Contract		Settlement price	High/Low for day		EstConts traded	Open interest
Long Gilt	(Jun 96)	106-03	106-07	105-24	34061	121728
German Bond	(Jun 96)	9892	9899	9872	43471	195543
J.G.Bond	(Jun 96)	11780	11792	11772	1937	0
Italian Bond	(Jun 96)	11402	11481	11368	17530	64025
3M Sterling	(Jun 96)	9403	9404	9401	8260	81737
	(Sep 96)	9389	9390	9385	10698	59444
3M Euro $	(Sep 96)	9877	9877	9875	443	N/A
	(Dec 96)	9844	9844	9843	2795	N/A
3M Euromark	(Jun 96)	9683	9685	9681	15835	211504
	(Sep 96)	9687	9687	9681	22056	234033
E.C.U.	(Jun 96)	9581	9582	9582	50	9249
	(Sep 96)	9584	9585	9585	3	4846
Euro SFr	(Jun 96)	9814	9815	9812	2697	25039
FT-SE 100	(Jun 96)	38170	38230	38060	6061	59550
FT-SE 250	(Jun 96)	45550			0	4471
Eurolira	(Jun 96)	9132	9140	9131	4937	51226

Liffe FT-SE Index Option

Settlement price: 3806.0	closing offer price				Call/Put
Series	3750	3800	3850	3900	Total/vols
May	75/13	40/27	17/55	5/94	- -
Jun	104/36	72/57	48/82	28/114	- -
Jul	130/57	98/76	73/101	50/129	- -
Aug	147/71	115/90	89/116	65/142	- -

Energy

Brent Crude	($/barrel)			Gas oil	($/tonne)		WTI		Products †	($/tonne)
IPE	5.30pm	*chg	Yr ago	IPE	close	*chg		6pm	Spot CIF NW Europe	
Jun	1880	-040	1658	May	16525	-025	Jun	2075	Unleaded Gasoline	228/232
Jul	1823	-036	1655	Jun	16450	-050	July	1995	Naphtha	192/194
Aug	1779	-030	1658	Jul	16325	-075	Aug	1925	EC Gasoil	164/166
Vol: 29,339		Index: 18.33		Vol:	10,984		Sep	1895	Heavy Fuel Oil	102/104

*Since 5.30pm previous day. Year ago prices average for week. Source: ICIS-London Oil Reports †6pm prices

Commodity Indices

GCSI Indices

	Base date	+Spot	%chg Day	31 Dec	%chg YTD	Year ago	%chg Yr
Index	1970=100	20933	-252	20350	+287	18363	+1399
Agricultural	1970=100	31338	-285	28175	+1123	24120	+2993
Energy	1983=100	7177	-337	7131	+065	6385	+1241
Indust'l Metals	1977=100	18818	-038	19332	-289	19934	-563
Livestock	1970=100	18083	+079	18271	-103	16843	+737
Precious Metals	1973=100	49658	+028	48986	+137	50121	-093

Source: Goldman, Sachs & Co. GSCI is a trademark and servicemark of Goldman, Sachs & Co. †Close as of 30 April 1996

Industrial Metals

London Metal Exchange

	$/tonne Cash	3 mths	Volume	LME Stocks		chg
Aluminum HG	1598-99	1630-31	54532	824350	+	3175
Aluminum Alloy	1335-45	1375-80	2215	83100	-	20
Copper A	2668-73	2602-03	80117	303575	+	2600
Lead	800-02	793-94	5812	89250	-	175
Nickel	7890-900	7990-95	14541	34974	-	288
Tin	6460-70	6480-85	4496	8770	+	320
Zinc	10295-315	1055-57	23819	622475	+	700

Settlement Conversion exchange rates:	£/$	$/Dm	$/¥
	14945	15379	10533

Stock volumes & change in tonnes as at Tuesday 30 April

Precious Metals

Spink & Son

pm fix /oz	$	£	Coins	$	£		$	£
Platinum	40200	26865	Britannia	409	274	Krugrands	386/98	258/66
Palladium	13150	8785	Britannia.5 oz	206	138	Sovs	90/94	60/63
Silver spot	533	357	Britannia.25 oz	105	70	Nobles	401/15	268/78
Gold Bu'ln	39230	26197	Britannia.10 oz	51	34	Maple Leaf	398/409	265/74

Agricultural

CMS

Cocoa		Coffee		Barley		Potatoes		Potatoes	
LCE	£/tonne	LCE	$/tonne	LCE	£/tonne	LCE	£/tonne	ATA	Gld/100kg
May	1027	May	1911	May	11490	May	11500	Apr	17
July	1090	July	1921	Sep	10975	Jun	22500	May	20
Sep	1110	Sep	1920	Nov	11085	Nov	8250	Jun	23
Vol:	7,389	Vol:	4,540	Vol:	39	Vol:	83	Vol:	555

White Sugar		Freight		Wheat		Corn		
LCE	$/tonne	LCE	$10/index pt	LCE	£/tonne	CBOT	Cents/bushel Hi-Lo	Settl
May	35670	Mar	1400	May	13150	May	48500-48400	48400
Aug	33090	Apr	1304	Jul	13350	Jul	46450-44600	46450
Oct	32230	Vol:	92	Sep	11665	Sep	37200-35700	37175
Vol	741	Index	1456	Vol:	467			

Other Softs

Mar	Maize (No3)**	$/tonne	na	May	Soya Oil§	FL/100kg	1010
Apr/May	Copra (†)	$/tonne	1960	April/May	Coconut Oil (†)	$/tonne	8200
May	Cotton (NY)	UScent/lb	8425	May	Sunflower Oil§	$/tonne	na
June	Wool	Acent/kg	6300	Jun/Jul	Rapeseed Oil§	FL/100kg	1025
April	Rubber*	Mcent/kg	3635	May	Groundnut Oil	$/tonne	9050

Origin: §Du/tch/EC · cdfy origin · †Philippines/Indonesia *Malaysia **N Europe Source: FT Information/Reuters

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
AXA Equity & Law Unit Trust Managers			
AXA Equity & Law Hse, Corporation St,			
Coventry CV1 1GD			
Tel: 01203 553231			
General Acc	6627	7050	d242
General Inc	5633	5991	d242
UK Growth Acc	4480	4787	d264
UK Growth Inc	2943	3131	d264
Higher Inc Acc	7974	8483	d406
Higher Inc Inc	4349	4627	406
Gilts/Fxd Int Acc	2051	2166	d564
Gilts/Fxd Int Inc	9008	9726	d564
Nth America	3930	4181	d000
Europe	3627	3859	d039
Japan Tst Acc	5205	5538	d000
Pacific Basin Tst Acc	4407	4689	d071
Brit Excel	8980	9564	278
Brit Fndmtls Acc	1159	1233	d457
Brit Fndmtls Inc	7945	8453	d457
Global Opps	1087	1157	009
Balanced Acc	6439	6829	d252
Balanced Inc	6067	6453	d252
Barclays Unicorn Limited			
11 Broadway, Stratford, London, E15 4BJ			
Tel: 0181 5345544			
Balanced Trusts			
Bst Inv Fd Acc	8940	9504	26
Bst Inv Fd Inc	4165	4339	d25
European Bd Acc	1138	1178	879
European Bd Inc	9629	9988	879
Exempt	7989	8525	d361
Financial	9775	1045	266
500	5307	5737	237
General	3245	3475	d261
Property	2472	2653	821
Trustee	2233	2387	239
Income Trusts			
Cash Acc	1221	1221	535
Cash Inc	1004	1004	d535
Distribution	1143	1149	611
Extra Income	1354	1448	d484
Gilt & Fxd Int*	5735	5938	818
Income	5824	6336	464
Income Builder	7032	7500	525
Intl Income	7203	7683	294
Growth Trusts - UK			
Capital	1402	1496	214
Growth Acc	4167	4445	232
Leisure (2)	1796	1921	089
Recovery	4905	5246	259
Smlr Cos Acc	6806	7297	196
Smlr Cos Inc	5865	6290	196
[illegible]			

Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
Managed Fund	7277	8273	d284
Managed Fund Acc	10249	10803	d284
UK Growth Funds			
Smaller Cos	5122	5449	d181
Smaller Cos Acc	6058	6445	d181
UK & General	9588	10179	d262
UK & General Acc	12420	13218	d262
UK Growth	16618	18006	d142
International Growth Funds			
[illegible]			

Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
FP Jap Sm Cos Accum	35870	38230	000
FP Monthly Distribution	7526	8032	d580
(Accum Units)	13200	14080	580
FP Sterling Deposit	10040	10040	535
(Accum Units)	1188	1188	535
FP Tokyo	9344	9966	000
(Accum Units)	9438	10060	000
FP UK Focus	4196	4501	d252
(Accum Units)	5108	5477	252
[illegible]			

Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
Hong Kong Index	£83465	£88715	d350
Hong Kong Bear	£88052	£93580	d350
UK Index	£130809	£139097	d475
Japan Index	£122154	£129077	d000
US Index	£168992	£187486	d350
Cash	£95062	£95537	d525
UK Bear	£81507	£84934	d475
Japan Bear	£93682	£98992	d000
[illegible]			

Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
Dividend	4630	4870	431
(Accum Units)	2007	2122	431
Equity Income	3651	3861	478
(Accum Units)	4946	5228	478
European & General	6528	6903	082
(Accum Units)	8326	8805	082
European Dividend	8400	8880	345
(Accum Units)	1044	1103	345
Extra Yield	4688	4862	494
(Accum Units)	1542	16014	494
[illegible]			

Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
Income	42388	45335	d310
W'wide Recovery Inc	48831	52228	048
W'wide Recovery Acc	48901	52312	048
American Growth Inc	32612	34749	001
American Growth Acc	32612	34749	001
European Gwth Inc	18186	19387	028
European Gwth Acc	18229	19454	028
Intl Emerging Cos Inc	31243	33415	d001
Intl Emerging Cos Acc	31263	33437	001
Far Eastern Growth Inc	33818	36276	084
[illegible]			

Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
European Gwth	9031	9778	082
(Accum Units)	9702	10277	082
Euro Smlr Cos	11182	11864	024
(Accum Units)	11318	12024	024
Far Eastern Gwth	12270	13082	000
(Accum Units)	12508	13339	000
Gilt & Fixed Interest	5088	5362	778
(Accum Units)	7422	7821	778
Global Bond	5374	5562	671
(Accum Units)	6225	6432	671
[illegible]			

Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
Stewart Ivory Unit Trust Mgrs Ltd			
45 Charlotte Sq, Edinburgh EH2 4HW			
Dealing & Enquiries: 0131 226 3271			
American	5629	5969	
(Accum Units)	6642	7043	-
British	12957	13709	288
(Accum Units)	24787	26225	288
Emerging Markets	1628	1734	d065
(Accum Units)	1649	1757	065
[illegible]			
Tiger	33050	34807	
(Accum Units)	34722	36358	
UK Blue Chip	7514	7868	19
(Accum Units)	8196	8581	19
UK Growth	64932	67981	22
(Accum Units)	149551	156587	22
UK High Yield	11214	11742	d50
(Accum Units)	38666	40487	d50
UK Mid-Cap	33147	34708	d24
(Accum Units)	63032	66378	d24
UK Smllr Cos	13426	14058	07
(Accum Units)	16044	16800	07
UK Smaller Cos Div	9389	9831	54
(Accum Units)	17142	17849	54

Key	
d	ex dividend
e	exit charge when units sold
buy	formerly 'offer'
sell	formerly 'bid'
x	Non SIB recognised funds

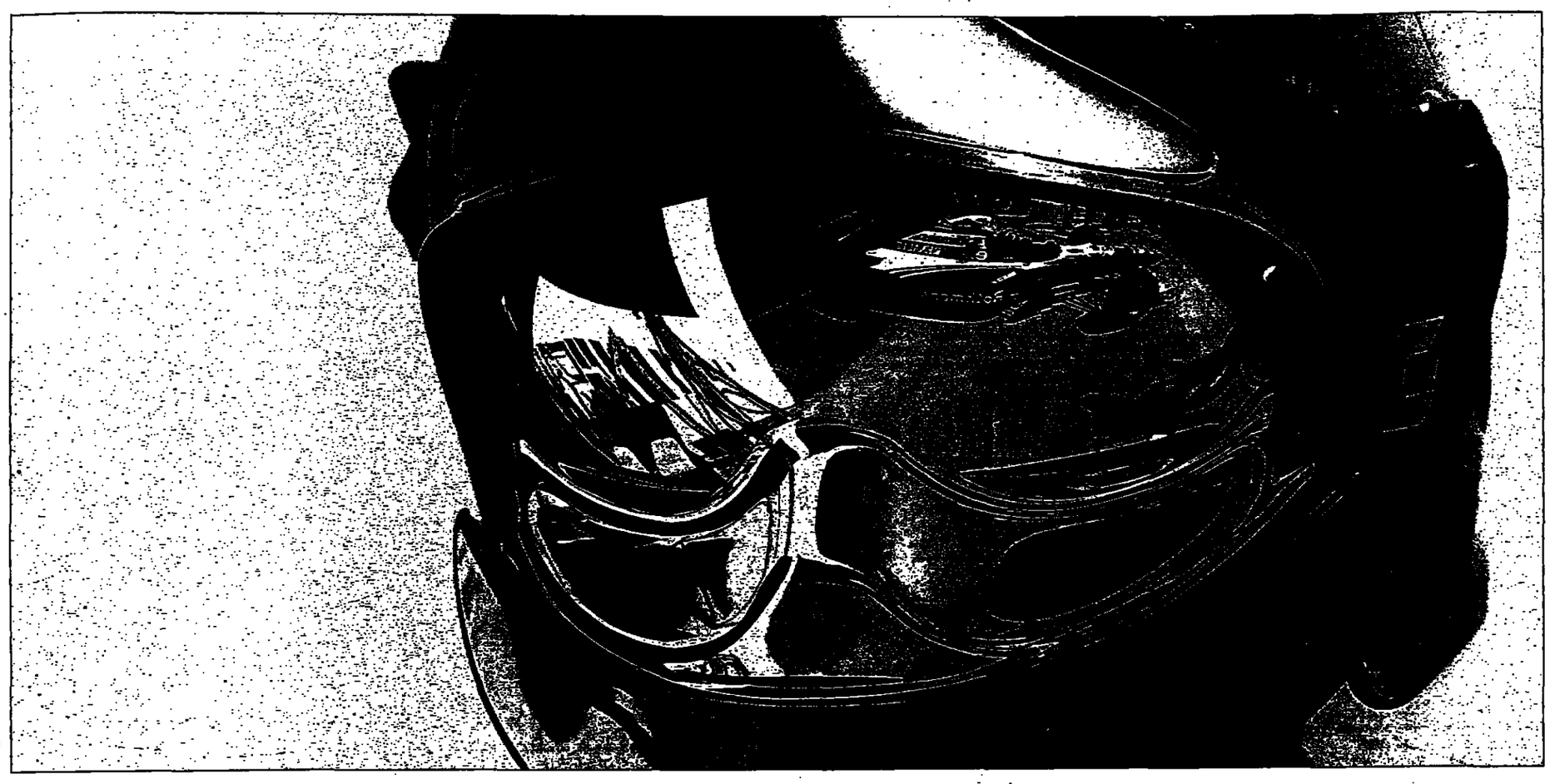
Copies of the most recent managers' reports and scheme particulars are available from fund managers free on request

A more extensive list of Unit Trusts and Managed Funds, ranked by performance within each sector and including offer prices, is published in Saturday editions of the *Independent*

F1 RACING

THE INDEPENDENT

PLAY FORMULA 1 DREAM TEAM



PASS NOTES

Johnny Herbert
Fourth on his grand prix debut in Brazil in 1989, the endlessly chirpy Herbert had to wait six years before his promise was finally fulfilled with a first grand prix win amid jubilant scenes at Silverstone last year. But, despite further success at the Italian Grand Prix, Herbert was eclipsed by his team-mate Michael Schumacher last year and lost his seat at Benetton at the end of the season. This year he lines up with another German hotshoe, Heinz-Harald Frentzen, at Sauber, and so far his perennially rotten luck has persisted. Herbert's self-belief, forged in his remarkable recovery from a terrible F3000 accident in 1988, remains as strong as ever, but this year may be his last chance to establish himself at the top.

WIN a drive in a Grand Prix car

Formula 1 Dream Team is just like Fantasy Football: you pick and manage your dream grand prix team to score points over the coming season.

Even though the grand prix season has started, it is not too late to join in: pit your wits against other enthusiasts and you could win our overall 1996 champion's prize, a drive in a Formula One car plus additional prizes for each race.

Individual race prizes range from trips to major grands prix, including this year's British Grand Prix at Silverstone, to a day at the Nigel Mansell Racing School at Brands Hatch.

Your team must comprise three drivers, a chassis and an engine; your budget is £40 million. Make your selections from the grand prix shopping list printed below; the only restriction is that your third driver must come from the £1 million category.

Details of how to enter are given on this page. You can enter a team at any point during the grand prix season but the earlier you enter, the greater your chances of being our overall champion. Remember, there are prizes for the winning Dream Team in each individual grand prix so you can enter a different team for each race.

HOW YOU SCORE

Points are awarded per race to the top six finishers, based on the Formula One World Championship points scoring system (10, 6, 4, 3, 2, 1) but with an extra 10 points awarded to each of the top six finishers. All drivers are eligible to score for a top six finish but can also notch up extra points as follows:

- The fastest driver in race-day warm-up will collect six points, with five for the second and so on down to one point for the sixth quickest.
- Drivers score one point for each place they make up over their grid position. Points are not deducted by losing places.
- Five points are lost if your driver posts first retirement, four for second down to one point lost for the fifth retirement.
- If your driver makes the quickest pit-stop (from the entry of the pitlane to the exit) you gain five points.
- If your driver sets the fastest lap time in the race, you gain five points.
- If your driver receives a stop/go penalty, you lose five points.
- If your driver starts on pole position, you gain five points.
- The Independent will name a Driver of the Day after each race for a particularly impressive performance, worth five points.
- Non-qualification for a grand prix loses you two points. If a driver is on the FIA's published starting grid but fails to take the start, no points are lost.
- Drivers removed from the results for any reason lose all points gained that weekend. Any driver not competing in a grand prix weekend scores no points.
- Chassis score and lose points in the same way as drivers for a top six finish or any early retirement. The score is based on the first chassis home of that particular manufacturer. Likewise, only the first chassis retirement will count if they are both among the first five to retire.
- Engine rules are the same as the chassis rules, without the retirement penalties.

DREAM TEAM TOP PRIZE
The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points at the end of the Grand Prix Championship season will win our top prize - a drive in a 650bhp F1 car. You will be flown to the AGS team's training school in the south of France for the most exhilarating experience of your life. The school specialises in F1 courses and provides all the racewear and instruction you will need for the day.

SAN MARINO GRAND PRIX PRIZE
The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points following the San Marino Grand Prix will win a VIP trip for two to the French Grand Prix on 30 June.

European Grand Prix Prize Winner
Congratulations to Andrew Pike from London with his team AWP Grand Prix Racing. He has won our trip for two to the Spanish Grand Prix on June 2.

HOW TO ENTER

Choose your Dream Team from the shopping list on this page. Remember, you must choose three drivers (the third from the £1 million section), one chassis and one engine. You must not exceed your budget of £40 million.

Give your team a name and register it by ringing 0891 891 805.

You will immediately be asked the entry question: How many races are there in this year's Formula One World Championship?

To enter your Dream Team details you can use one of two methods.

Method 1 uses a tone phone that lets you key in the code numbers of your driver, chassis and engine choices. The computer will check that your team falls within budget and is eligible.

Method 2 uses a non-tone phone and give your details verbally. A budget check is not possible using this method.

When you have registered your Dream Team, you will be asked to predict the number of points this year's champion will notch up over the year. In case of a tie at the end of the season, the nearest figure to the champion's points will win the top prize. In the event of a further tie, the team that registered first will win.

Once you have registered your team you will be asked for your name, address and telephone number. Your team selections plus your personal details will be played back to you and, when you confirm that they are correct, you will be given a PIN number.

This is confirmation of your entry and will enable you to access the score checking line.

There is no limit on the number of teams an individual can enter, but only one team can be registered per call.

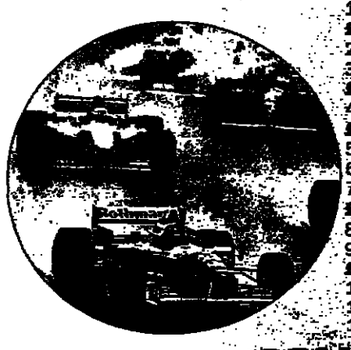
CHECKING YOUR SCORE

You can check your team's position at any time by calling 0891 891 806 and quoting your PIN number. If you want to know the individual driver, chassis and engine scores from the most recent race, call 0891 891 807. This line will also list the Top 50 Formula One Dream Teams.

Rules

1. All telephone calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate, 49p per minute at allother times, with a typical call to secure your entry lasting between five and sevenminutes.
2. The deadline to be included in a particular race is midday the Friday prior to that race.
3. The judge's decision is final, no correspondence will be entered into and there is no cash alternative for prizes.
4. Employees of Newspaper Publishing Plc, Haymarket Publishing Ltd and all associated companies and their families are ineligible.
5. Entrants must be 18 or over and residents of the UK or the Irish Republic.
6. To be eligible for the main prize, you must hold a current driving licence, be no more than 1.95m tall and weigh no more than 220lbs.
7. All scores will be worked out according to the official FIA time sheets produced at the meeting. The values stated for drivers, engines and chassis bear no relation to real life.
8. In the event of a tie for the Dream Team Top Prize or for any of the individual race prizes, the team that registered first will win.
9. For lost PIN numbers, call 0891 891 808. Helpline: 01275 344183.
10. The Top 50 Teams Line, lists the top 50 teams from the last race. Both the Team Position Check Line and the Results & Top 50 Teams Line will be updated at 2 pm on the Monday following a race.

Make your selection from the Grand Prix Shopping List



DRIVERS
£25m
1 M Schumacher
£23m
2 J Alesi
3 D Hill
£20m
4 G Berger
£18m
5 D Coulthard
6 E Irvine
7 J Villeneuve
£13m
8 M Hakkinen
9 H H Frentzen
£10m
10 M Brundle
11 R Barrichello
12 J Herbert
£6m
13 M Salo
14 P Lamy
£4m
15 P Diniz
16 U Katayama
17 J Verstappen
18 O Panis
£3m
19 L Badoer
20 R Rosset
21 A Montermini
£2m
22 G Fisichella
23 V Sospiri*
24 T Marques*
25 F Lagorce*
26 H Noda*
27 T Inoue*
£1m
28 M Blundell*
29 J-C Boullion*
30 K Brack*
31 K Burt*
32 E Collard*
33 N Fontana*
34 D Franchitti*
35 N Larini*
36 J Magnussen*
37 A Prost*
38 G Tarquini*
39 K Wendlinger*

*Not competing in the San Marino GP but may compete later.

CHASSIS
£20m
40 Benetton
41 Williams
£18m
42 Ferrari
£15m
43 McLaren
£14m
44 Sauber
45 Jordan
£10m
46 Ligier
£6m
47 Tyrell
£5m
48 Arrows
£3m
49 Minardi
£1m
50 Forti

ENGINES
£20m
51 Renault
£18m
52 Ferrari
£15m
53 Mercedes
£12m
54 Peugeot
£10m
55 Mugen
£8m
56 Ford V10
£6m
57 Yamaha
£4m
58 Hart
£3m
59 Ford Zetec V8
£2m
60 Ford ED V8

GRAND PRIX '96 RACE SCHEDULE

San Marino GP May 5
Monaco GP May 19
Spanish GP June 2
Canadian GP June 16
French GP June 30
British GP July 14
German GP July 28
Hungarian GP August 11
Belgian GP August 25
Italian GP September 8
Portuguese GP September 22
Japanese GP October 13

DREAM TEAM registration: 0891 891 805 ENTER TODAY

- **TEAM POSITION CHECK LINE: 0891 891 806**
- **RESULTS & TOP 50 TEAMS LINE: 0891 891 807**

هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الاصل

Trigger back on winning trail after walkabout

Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON
reports from Ascot

Most visitors to Australia return with memories of koala bears hugging eucalyptus trees or performers hugging each other at the Opera House. The images are not so gentle for Mark Johnston. The Middleham trainer has travelled to Victoria twice and on both occasions he has needed a telescope to locate his runner in the Melbourne Cup. Quick Ransom was 23rd in 1994 and Double Trigger 17th when favourite last year; results which Johnston is finding hard to distance from his mind.

Yesterday, Double Trigger won on his first outing since the Melbourne Cup, and in the aftermath it became clear that his trainer's thoughts had already wandered some months forward and a November return to Australia. "The only way I'll win a Melbourne Cup is to keep trying and learning about the race," he said. "One or two efforts don't tell you very much.

"There are so many factors there, the travelling, the training, the quarantine and the way the race is run, but it's not an impossibility. It costs £50,000 to get to Melbourne and it's difficult to persuade an owner to go back. All I want to do is keep going and keep trying and I'm sure we'll win it in the end."

Experience has taught Johnston that once in place, a Melbourne Cup horse should not be overworked. "We've learned that they've go to be very fit before they go and you musn't do too much once you get there," he said. "We did very little with Trigger compared to what we normally do but the Australians were dumbfounded about the amount of work we did."

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Domicksky
(Hamilton 3.10)
NB: Carol Again
(Wolverhampton 3.50)

There was no relaxation either for the chestnut yesterday, when Jason Weaver had to push his mount's ears off for virtually the whole two-mile journey of the Sagaro Stakes before collaring Grey Shot close home. Johnston was not entirely enamoured by this ride as he believes Double Trigger should be left to find his own pace.

The five-year-old will find his way back here next month for the Gold Cup, in which he is likely to meet his brother, Double Eclipse. The latter, it appears, has already emerged as Kingsley House's No 1 selection for Melbourne this autumn.

Willie Haggas has attempted no such travelling feat, but he achieved a geographical milestone yesterday when Yeast's victory in the Victoria Cup meant he had sent out a winner on every Flat course in Britain.

Haggas also supervises the career of the useful Mtoto colt Shaamit, who was detected working nicely with the well-regarded Clever Cliche from the Henry Cecil stable on Saturday. Shaamit is 33-1 for the Derby, which may look rather corpulent after his Classic trial.

Cecil was in the winners' enclosure when his debutante *Distant Oasis* give her rivals 10 lengths start before sauntering home in the opener. Pat Eddery missed the ride because of 'flu, but expects to be back for his Guineas mounts, Storm Trooper and Bosra Sham; Michael Kinane is standing by to ride the latter. "We put Distant Oasis in the Coronation [Stakes, at Royal Ascot] the other day so we must have thought she was all right," Cecil said. "We definitely thought she was better than a claimer." Quite right, Henry.

Double Trigger (right) just outguns Grey Shot in Ascot's Sagaro Stakes yesterday Photograph: Robert Hallam

Henman misses Cup tie

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS

Illness has caused Tim Henman to withdraw from Britain's Davis Cup team to play Slovenia in the Euro/African Zone Group II tie at Newcastle, which starts tomorrow. Bristol's Nick Gould takes his place.

Henman, who last weekend returned from a tour of India, Japan and Korea, has been advised by his doctor to rest for two weeks and take medication. "I haven't been feeling a 100 per cent for the last three weeks, and it has finally caught up with me," Henman said. "Naturally I am bitterly disappointed to be missing out."

On Monday, Henman, the 21-year-old national champion, overtook his team-mate Greg Rusedski by four places in the world rankings, rising to No 54. Last week he was a semi-finalist in the Seoul tournament.

David Lloyd, Britain's captain, said: "It's a blow when any team loses a player of Tim's calibre and I was very sorry when he called to tell me the news. We shall miss him and I hope he gets fit soon. We've still got to a job here and I am confident that the boys will want to give their best for Tim and Great Britain."

Davidson out of contention at Badminton

Equestrianism

Bruce Davidson's chance of repeating last year's success in the Mitsubishi Badminton Horse Trials disappeared yesterday when his horse, Squelch, was withdrawn from the big event which begins this morning, **writes Genevieve Murphy**.

The American had a crunching fall at Lexington, Kentucky, on Saturday. He travelled to England and was hoping to compete until an X-ray revealed he had broken his shoulder.

Two British contenders, William Fox-Pitt and Kristina Gifford, withdrew this week because of minor injuries to their horses. Charlotte Bathe, on the winning European Open team with both of them last year, dislocated her shoulder 11 days ago and may have to withdraw The Cool Customer after the dressage.

Mary King still has her two mounts, King William and Star Appeal. Leslie Law also has two – the shortlisted Capitano and New Flavour, both of which are small and have a large percentage of thoroughbred blood which should help them cope with the heat and humidity of Atlanta.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Football
(7.45 unless stated)

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP
Leeds v Tottenham
Nottm Forest v Newcastle

GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE
Macclesfield v Slough
Northwich v Kettering

ICIS LEAGUE Premier Division: Carshalton v Aylesbury (7.30). **First Division:** Bognor Regis Town v Tooting & Mitcham; Heybridge Swifts v Basingstoke. **Second Division:** Wivenhoe v Canvey Island. **Third Division:** Tring v Harefield.
UNIBOND LEAGUE Premier Division: Boston Utd v Guiseley (7.30).
BEAZER HOMES LEAGUE Southern Division: Cinderford Town v Tonbridge Angels.
WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE First Division: Cray Wanderers v Greenwich Borough; Furness v Dartford.
NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE First Division: Newcastle Town v Flixton; Trafford v Mossley.
JEWSON EASTERN LEAGUE Premier Division: Haverhill Rovers v Wroxham; Harwich & Parkeston v Stowmarket Town.
UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE First Division: Peacehaven & Telscombe v Portfield.
LEAGUE OF WALES: Cwmbran v Barry Town (7.30).
PONTINS LEAGUE Second Division: Bradford v Leicester (7.0); Mansfield v Port Vale (7.0); Preston v Grimsby (7.0); Middlesbrough v Huddersfield (7.0).
AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION First Division: Ipswich v Tottenham (7.30); West Ham v Crystal Palace (2.0). **Second Division:** Newport AFC v Cheltenham.

Rugby Union
(7.30 unless stated)
HEINEKEN NATIONAL LEAGUE First Division: Treorchy v Cardiff (7.15).

Speedway
PREMIER LEAGUE: London v Exeter (7.30); Middlesbrough v Poole (7.30); Sheffield v Ipswich (7.45).

Other sports
CYCLING: Tissues GP Tour of Lancashire.
GOLF: Welsh Women's Open (Chepstow).
EQUESTRIANISM: Horse trials (Badminton).
SNOOKER: Embassy World Championship (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield).
TENNIS: LTA Spring Satellite Tournament (Queenswood).

SALISBURY

HYPERION
2.00 Jona Holley
2.30 Little Black Dress
3.00 Montendre
3.30 Ship's Dancer
4.00 Story Line
4.30 Dramatic Act
5.00 Meranti
5.30 Degree

GOING: Good to Firm (Firm in places).
STALLS: 1m2f – inside; 1m1f – stands' side; *remainder – far side.*
DRAW ADVANTAGE: High for 5f to 7f except on soft going.
■ Right-hand course, mainly uphill and testing.
■ Course is 3m SW of city off A3094. Salisbury station 3m. **ADMISSION:** Members £12.50; Tattersalls £8; Course Enclosure £4 (accompanied under-16s free). **CAR PARK:** Free.

SIS RACING CHANNEL

■ **LEADING TRAINERS WITH RUNNERS: R Hannon** – 38 winners from 276 runners gives a success ratio of 13.8% and a loss to a £1 level stake of £6.43; **J Dunlop** – 15 winners, 104 runners, 14.4%, -£33.05; **P Cole** – 13 winners, 85 runners, 15.3%, -£10.21; **Lord Huntingdon** – 12 winners, 55 runners, 21.8%, +£12.99.
■ **LEADING JOCKEYS: L Dettori** – 25 wins, 109 rides, 22.9%, +£41.79; **J Reid** – 24 wins, 154 rides, 15.6%, -£28.52; **W Carson** – 22 wins, 146 rides, 15.2%, -£53.76; **Pat Eddery** – 20 wins, 104 rides, 19.2%, -£18.37.
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Talathath (visored, 2.00), Roman Gold (4.00).
WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: None.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Branston Abby (3.00) has been sent 264 miles by M Johnston from Middleham, North Yorkshire.

2.00 ALMOND APPRENTICE HANDICAP (CLASS G) £3,000 added 7f Penalty Value £2,225

1 1/0000-0 DUFFERTOES (35) (C) (D) (Mrs Patricia J Williams) M Ryan 4 10 0 ... R Mullen (5) 9
2 320-030 STOPPES BROW (24) (D) (C J Pennick) G L Moore 4 10 0 ... A Lakeman (5) 18 V
3 33-50 TALATHATH (FR) (20) (Mrs Christine Rawson) C Dwyer 4 9 6 ... F Tynan (7) 11 V
4 04043-0 SERIOUS OPTION (110) (P F I Cole Ltd) P Cole 5 9 5 ... J Bosley (7) 16
5 113400- MR CUBE (232) (D) (R Miles) J Bradley 6 9 3 ... R Waterfield 2 V
6 05350-0 PERSIAN AFFAIR (3) (D) (D A Wilson) T J Naughton 5 9 3 ... Rachael Moody (7) 3
7 00203-5 AMBER FORT (19) (Lord Portman) P Cole 3 9 1 ... David O'Neill (7) 1 B
8 2004-00 DESERT CALM (16) (D) (Mrs Neys Dutfield) Mrs P Dutfield 7 8 13 ... M Semple (5) 6 B
9 0-00 TARIAN (USA) (24) (The Loopy Partnership) G Balding 4 8 12 ... R Gordon (7) 4
10 000-0 ROKA (24) (Mrs P Jubert) R Hannon 4 8 11 ... K Salt (7) 5
11 540060 JAAZIM (20) (D) (D Knight) M Madgwick 6 8 8 ... A Eddery 7
12 622660 HAWAII STORM (FR) (19) (CD) (C C Capel) D ffrench Davis 8 8 8 ... G Hannon (5) 10
13 212315 MOI CANARD (20) (D) (BF) (Richard J Gray) B Pearce 3 8 8 ... J Wilkinson 13
14 050-0 LITTLE MILLIE (13) (T K Pearce) P Hayward 3 8 8 ... I Dennis 12
15 00-0 JONA HOLLEY (16) (I A Balding) I Balding 3 8 6 ... C Scudder (3) 14
16 6/0000- NABJELSEDR (334) (Bois De Boulougne Racing Club) A Newcombe 6 8 4 ... J Fowle (5) 17
17 6000-13 KING PARROT (45) (D) (Lord Huntingdon) Lord Huntingdon 8 8 4 ... C Cogan (7) 8
18 0005-60 ALMAPA (20) (CD) (P Slade) R Hodges 4 8 3 ... P Doe (5) 20
19 0521-52 SCISSOR RIDGE (16) (D) (Donald J Smith) J Bridger 4 8 3 ... T Field (5) 19
20 531331 SEA SPOUSE (39) (D) (Seven Seas Racing) M Blanshard 5 8 2 ... G Faulkner 15
– 20 declared –

BETTING: 8-1 King Parrot, Moi Canard, 9-1 Sea Spouse, 10-1 Jaazim, Mr Cube, Amber Fort, 12-1 Jona Holley, Scissor Ridge, 14 Roka, Serious Option, 16 Persian Affair, Stoppes Brow, 20 others
1995: Scharnhorst 3 7 12 A Daly 12-1 (S Dow) 20 ran

2.30 LAUDERDALE FILLIES HANDICAP (CLASS D) £5,100 added 1m Penalty Value £4,078

1 024104- ALDANEH (191) (D) (Sheikh Essa Bin Mubarak) R Hannon 4 10 0 ... L Dettori 6
2 053043- ZELDA ZONK (187) (Mrs Christine Panting) B Meehan 4 9 6 ... R Hughes 7
3 2311- JUBILEE PLACE (269) (Timothy N Chick) T Thomson Jones 3 9 2 ... W Carson 11
4 34101-0 LILLI CLAIRE (28) (C Leslie) A Foster 3 9 1 ... T Sprake 4
5 5310-32 PRINCESS DANIELLE (20) (C) (D) (Mrs Marion Wickham) W Muir 4 9 0 ... J Reid 1
6 436431- CAPILANO PRINCESS (180) (H G Coles) D Haydn Jones 3 8 13 ... D R McCabe (3) 12
7 54-0 LITTLE BLACK DRESS (USA) (28) (G Howard-Spink) R Charlton 3 8 13 ... M Hills 8
8 3150-30 POLLY PECULIAR (10) (D) (Miss Victoria Marshall) B Smart 5 8 13 ... R Cochrane 3
9 6331- HONORABLE ESTATE (224) (C) (R A Bernard) R Hannon 3 8 11 ... Dane O'Neill (5) 2
10 006130- MISS LAUGHTER (218) (D) (Miss J Wilkinson) J Hills 4 8 5 ... R Hills 5
11 60-0 AGE OF REALITY (USA) (13) (HRH Prince Fahd Salman) H Candy 3 8 5 ... C Rutter 13
12 06000- MYSTIC DAWN (197) (Up and Downer Partnership) S Dow 3 8 1 ... A Daly (5) 10
13 353050 SUNSET HARBOUR (19) (R J Thomas) T J Naughton 3 7 10 ... M Henry (5) 9
– 13 declared –

Minimum weight: 7st 10lb. True handicap weight: Sunset Harbour 7st 7lb.
BETTING: 5-1 Aldaneh, 11-2 Honorable Estate, 6-1 Little Black Dress, Princess Danielle, 13-2 Zelda Zonk, 10-1 Capilano Princess, Jubilee Place, Miss Laughter, 12-1 Lilli Claire, 14-1 others
1995: Hujjab 3 9 3 W Carson 3-1 (J Dunlop) 11 ran

FORM GUIDE

It was good to soft when **PRINCESS DANIELLE** won over a mile and a quarter here last September, but she was also successful on good to firm over today's distance at Nottingham in June and can return to winning form following good efforts in both outings so far this season. Willie Muir's filly took the minor placing behind Manful and subsequent scorer Hazard A Guess in a field of 27 at Doncaster on the first day of the season and was beaten a length and a half by Eskimo Nell at Nottingham three weeks ago. Those races were both at a mile and a quarter but dropping down in distance shouldn't inconvenience her. **Lilli Claire** landed sellers at Windsor (good to firm) and Goodwood last term and will be sharper for her run behind Sea Spray in the Masaka Stakes at Kempton over Easter. Willie Carson is an interesting booking for Tim Thomson Jones's **Jubilee Place.** This filly, after being placed in her first two races at two, landed her other two – at Chepstow (an auction maiden) and Windsor (nursery) – both on good to firm. The Prince Sabo filly, like six of her dozen rivals here, lacks a recent race but can still figure. Also having their first outings of the season are the Richard Hannon-trained pair **Aldaneh** (Frankie Dettori) and **Honorable Estate** (Dane O'Neill). Aldaneh struck form in a maiden at Brighton (firm) in June and later won a handicap at Windsor (good to firm), winding up with a close-up fourth behind Secret Aly at Leicester in October. Honorable Estate scraped home from Singoalla at Salisbury in June but hasn't been out since. **Selection:** PRINCESS DANIELLE

3.00 CHEVIOT CONDITIONS STAKES (CLASS C) £7,650 added 6f Penalty Value £4,938

1 1114-62 IKTAMAL (USA) (16) (D) (Maktoum Al Maktoum) E Dunlop 4 9 11 ... Paul Eddery 10
2 5100F-6 SHIKARI'S SON (20) (D) (BF) (Alan Spargo) J Cullinan 9 9 11 ... T Quinn 4
3 161000- LOCH PATRICK (217) (D) (Miss E M L Coller) M Madgwick 6 9 9 ... A McGlone 3
4 0220-03 BRANSTON ABBY (5) (D) (J David Abell) M Johnston 7 9 8 ... L Dettori 1
5 1001-11 CARRANITA (12) (C) (D) (Lamb Lane Associates) B Palling 6 9 8 ... T Sprake 8
6 445010- QUEENFISHER (236) (K Higson) G L Moore 4 9 4 ... Candy Morris 5
7 300445- EVERGLADES (210) (D) (Mrs Stephen Lussier) R Charlton 8 9 3 ... S Sanders 6
8 44600-5 MONTENDRE (40) (D) (David Mort) M McCormack 9 9 3 ... J Reid 9
9 21214- RAMBLING BEAR (236) (D) (Mrs Michael Hill) M Blanshard 3 9 3 ... R Cochrane 2
10 213- ORTOLAN (292) (C) (J A Lazzari) R Hannon 3 8 13 ... R Hughes 7
– 10 declared –

BETTING: 3-1 Iktamal, Branston Abby, 100-30 Ortolan, 9-2 Carranita, 7-1 Everglades, 9-1 Montendre, 10-1 Rambling Bear, 12-1 Loch Patrick, 16-1 others
1995: Shamanic 3 8 13 Pat Eddery 9-2 (R Hannon) 8 ran

FORM GUIDE

IKTAMAL kept on improving last year and was notching his fourth success when getting home in a blanket finish for the 26-runner William Hill Sprint Handicap over today's distance at Goodwood in September. He wound up with a good fourth to Royale Figurine in a Listed race at Newmarket. Ed Dunlop's strapping Danzig colt, a short-head behind **Montendre** when they were fifth and sixth to Fire Dome at Doncaster on Lincoln day, showed the benefit of that opening outing when chasing home Passion For Life in the Abernant Stakes at Newmarket and can progress again. **Branston Abby**, who will be having her 79th race and bidding for her 20th win, finished some four lengths behind Iktamal at Newmarket. She ran third to Young Em at Leicester last Saturday over seven, and that trip probably suits her best nowadays. **Carranita** comes here in cracking form after winning both her starts this season, at Beverley (Listed) and Thirsk. The three-year-olds **Rambling Bear** and **Ortolan** could both prove dangerous. Rambling Bear won twice and was runner-up twice from his first four starts and was unplaced for the only time when a creditable fourth to Cayman Kai in the Group Two Flying Childers at Doncaster on his final start. Richard Hannon thinks a lot of Ortolan. This Prince Sabo grey followed his five-length defeat of Passion For Life (who has improved considerably this year) with a third of 17 behind Blue Iris in the Weatherby's Super Sprint at Newbury in July but suffered foot trouble and hasn't raced since. **Selection:** IKTAMAL

3.30 GRAMPIAN HANDICAP (CLASS E) £4,200 added 3YO 1m 4f Penalty Value £3,418

1 0 05 MACMORRIS (USA) (16) (Sir George Meyrick) P Cole 9 7 ... T Quinn 10
2 0-34 HANBITOOH (USA) (16) (Maktoum Al Maktoum) E Dunlop 9 7 ... R Cochrane 11
3 01-0021 BELLE'S BOY (24) (D) (Mrs M M Paling) B Palling 9 4 ... T Sprake 8
4 4050- GALWAY BLADE (203) (T Slade) A Jarvis 8 13 ... R Hughes 4
5 0520 STERLING FELLOW (114) (J A Lewis) R Hannon 8 7 ... Dane O'Neill (5) 2
6 0000 HIGH DESIRE (174) (J Gale) J Arnold 8 7 ... M Henry (5) 7
7 000-0 SHIP'S DANCER (24) (BF) (Miss Helena De Chair) J Dunlop 8 6 ... J Reid 9
8 50500- SERIOUS TRUST (201) (G Moore) Sir Mark Prescott 8 5 ... S Sanders 8
9 000-0 PRINCELY AFFAIR (24) (S C Sampson) M Bell 8 4 ... M Fenton 1
10 000-0 ASTRA MARTIN (9) (Mrs Louise Murphy) P Murphy 7 12 ... N Adams 3 V
11 06-6 BRIGHTER BYFAAH (28) (Paul G Jacobs) N Graham 7 11 ... Paul Eddery 12
12 00000-0 ESKIMO KISS (30) (Mrs Alexander Scott) M Fetherston-Godley 7 10 ... Martin Dwyer (7) 5
– 12 declared –

Minimum weight: 7st 10lb. True handicap weight: Eskimo Kiss 6st 13lb.
BETTING: 3-1 Hanbitooh, 7-2 Macmorris, 5-1 Sterling Fellow, 6-1 Ship's Dancer, 8-1 Belle's Boy, 10-1 Princely Affair, 12-1 others
1995: Credit Squeeze 5 10 0 J Quinn 9-1 (R Johnson Houghton) 18 ran

FORM GUIDE

***BELLE'S BOY**, who got off the mark at Wolverhampton in the last of three starts at two,* was beaten three parts of a length by Esperto in a seller at Nottingham early last month and easily justified favouritism in a claimer at Warwick, slamming Four Weddings six lengths. The runner-up boosted the form when going one better at Pontefract on Monday and Belle's Boy looks another winner for Tim Sprake, who has been in good form this season. Lightly raced **Hanbitooh**, a one-paced 22-length third to Maiden Castle at Leicester in March on his return, stayed on to finish third behind six-length scorer Sharaf over this longer journey at Folkestone. There should be better still to come and he might provide most danger despite being on 9st 7lb on his handicap debut. **Macmorris**, who shares top weight, finished a neck behind Hanbitooh at Folkestone and he is another who looks bound to improve with experience. **Selection:** BELLE'S BOY

4.00 PENTLAND CONDITIONS STAKES (CLASS C) £7,650 added 3YO 1m 2f Penalty Value £5,003

1 61132- ALZANTI (195) (C) (Elite Racing Club) P Cole 9 0 ... T Quinn 2
2 14-6 HERON ISLAND (14) (R E Sangster) P Chapple-Hyam 9 0 ... J Reid 4
3 3211-10 ROMAN GOLD (12) (D) (George E K Teo) R Hannon 9 0 ... R Hughes 1 B
4 1- STORY LINE (221) (Broughton Homes Ltd) B Hills 8 13 ... M Hills 3
– 4 declared –

BETTING: 7-4 Heron Island, 2-1 Story Line, 5-2 Alzanti, 8-1 Roman Gold
1995: Precede 3 9 0 T Quinn 1-2 (P Cole) 4 ran

FORM GUIDE

A narrow winner on his debut in a 17-runner race at Doncaster (1m) last September and fourth behind Even Top at Newmarket (Listed) on his only other run at two, **HERON ISLAND** was a drifter in the betting at the Craven meeting but led for five furlongs, finishing an eight-length fourth to 2,000 Guineas hope Storm Trooper. He is bound to be a lot sharper for that run and the extra furlong will be a help. **Alzanti** gained consecutive wins here and at Goodwood (nursery) last season, and went on to run third to Oriel Lad at Chester and a neck second to Crystal Falls at Doncaster. **Roman Gold** gained all-weather wins at Lingfield and Southwell in November and held off market rival House Of Riches gamely at Haydock on his return. He is tried in blinkers after finishing nearer last than first against Al's Alibi at Newbury. **Story Line**, although going from 8-1 to double those odds, won her single start at Ascot (7f, good to soft) last September without being extended. Barry Hills's filly could go close if as effective on this different surface. **Selection:** HERON ISLAND

4.30 MORRISTON MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) (DIV I) £4,400 added 3YO 1m Penalty Value £3,623

1 4- ALSAHIB (USA) (197) (Hamdan Al Maktoum) H Thomson Jones 9 0 ... R Hills 7
2 ALZEUS (Mrs B Sumner) C Horgan 9 0 ... Paul Eddery 3
3 BEAUCHAMP KNIGHT (E Penser) H Candy 9 0 ... C Rutter 2
4 223-53 CRAZY CHIEF (16) (BF) (David J Simpson) P Cole 9 0 ... T Quinn 14
5 DON BOSIO (USA) (Sultan Al Kabeer) M Stoute 9 0 ... J Reid 6
6 EFFECTUAL (Blandford Thoroughbreds) J Toller 9 0 ... S Sanders 9
7 FAR DAWN (USA) (Peter Wiegand) G Harwood 9 0 ... A Clark 12
8 0- FIRBUR (196) (Paul G Jacobs) N Graham 9 0 ... R Hughes 11
9 GAIN LINE (USA) (K Abdullah) R Charlton 9 0 ... T Sprake 13
10 MALE-ANA-MOU (Oh So Bright Syndicate) D Elsworth 9 0 ... A Procter 15
11 MOON MISCHIEF (Sir Roger G Gibbs) Lady Herries 9 0 ... M Hills 1
12 MOTRIB (USA) (Mrs H M Goody) M Madgwick 9 0 ... M Fenton 16
13 00- PREMIER GENERATION (196) (Mrs W A Oram) D Arbuthnot 9 0 ... R Cochrane 10
14 SIDE NOTE (K Abdullah) H Cecil 9 0 ... W Ryan 5
15 56- SOCIETY MAGIC (USA) (198) (Miss A V Hill) I Balding 9 0 ... L Dettori 4
16 2- DRAMATIC ACT (218) (Michael Smith) C R Barwell 8 9 ... N Adams 8
– 15 declared –

BETTING: 5-2 Side Note, 6-1 Alsahib, 7-1 Dramatic Act, 9-1 Crazy Chief, Don Bosio, 10-1 Society Magic, 12-1 Gain Line, Moon Mischief, 14-1 Alzeus, others
1995: Yam 3 8 9 R Hughes 11-2 (M Channon) 11 ran

FORM GUIDE

Henry Cecil has had a couple of winning newcomers lately and the Warning colt **SIDE NOTE,** who is out of 1976 Irish 1,000 Guineas and Yorkshire Oaks heroine Sarah Siddons, will not have to be anything out of the ordinary to follow suit. Side Note is a half-brother to Seymour Hicks (Great Voltigeur) and Princess Patti (Irish Oaks). The selection might have most to fear from **Alsahib**, who finished a good fourth to Prize Giving (easy winner of a Newmarket handicap a fortnight ago) at Yarmouth in October on his only run to date. **Crazy Chief**, placed in all three races last term and a close-up third to Sandabar at Folkestone, can again make the frame. **Selection:** SIDE NOTE

5.00 SUTHERLAND HANDICAP (CLASS E) £4,200 added 6f Penalty Value £3,548

1 6005-40 DENBRAE (24) (D) (Michael Meilesh) D Murray Smith 4 10 0 ... R Painter (5) 2
2 04500-0 OGGI (24) (D) (Skyline Racing Ltd) P Makin 5 9 12 ... Paul Eddery 13
3 3-30244 PATSY GRIMES (88) (C) (D) (J K Grimes) J S Moore 6 9 10 ... R Hughes 5
4 43461-0 SIZZLING (10) (D) (Mrs P Jubert) R Hannon 4 9 8 ... Dane O'Neill (5) 7
5 36415-0 WINTER SCOUT (USA) (10) (D) (Mrs S M Russell) C Brooks 8 9 8 ... R Cochrane 18
6 000-655 ALWAYS GRACE (24) (D) (Easy Going Partnership) Miss Gay Kelleway 4 9 5 ... B Ford (7) 19
7 6-64136 JIGSAW BOY (6) (D) (The Jigsaw Puzzlers) P Murphy 7 9 6 ... M Fenton 11
8 001405- ANITA'S CONTESSA (142) (Mrs Anita Quinn) B Palling 4 9 4 ... T Sprake 12
9 50000-0 BRYAN ROBSON (USA) (24) (The Temperance Society) G Balding 5 9 3 ... S Sanders 10
10 6000-06 GREAT HALL (16) (CD) (Miss M C Fraser) P Cundell 7 8 11 ... Martin Dwyer (7) 20 B
11 4/06060- SING UP (140) (Unit Partnership) M McCormack 4 8 11 ... J Reid 4
12 60-0 CA'D'ORO (19) (Miss B Swire) G Balding 3 8 10 ... S Drowne (3) 17
13 3601/00- ADMIRALS REALM (332) (D) (D F Gillard) A Newcombe 7 8 8 ... M Henry (5) 8
14 04460-5 MERANTI (30) (G Steinberg) S Dow 3 8 7 ... T Quinn 16
15 00-U500 DELROB (24) (Mrs E M Haydn Jones) D Haydn Jones 5 8 6 ... D R McCabe (3) 9
16 166550- JOLIS PRESENT (189) (Four Jays Racing Partnership 2) M Ryan 3 8 5 ... W Carson 15 B
17 000-0 NEWLANDS CORNER (10) (The Jolly Skolars) J Akehurst 3 8 0 ... A McGlone 3
18 0/0-504 POINTER (16) (In For The Crack) Mrs P Dutfield 4 7 13 ... C Rutter 6
19 060- ANDSOME BOY (191) (The Select Partnership) C R Barwell 3 7 10 ... N Varley (3) 1
20 505003- LORINS GOLD (249) (Mrs M R Taylor) A Turnell 6 7 10 ... N Adams 14
– 20 declared –

Minimum weight: 7st 10lb. True handicap weights: Andsome Boy 7st 9lb, Lorins Gold 7st 2lb.
BETTING: 6-1 Sizzling, 7-1 Jigsaw Boy, 8-1 Great Hall, 10-1 Jolis Present, Patsy Grimes, Winter Scout, 12-1 Bryan Robson, Oggi, Meranti, 14-1 others
1995: Thatcherella 4 9 7 B Thomson 13-2 (D Chappell) 18 ran

FORM GUIDE

MERANTI ran some good races without managing to be placed last year and made a promising return when a two-length fifth of 21 behind Tymeera at Nottingham early last month. He goes off a pound lower mark here and has a favourable high draw. The Tymeera stable of Bryn Palling is represented by **Anita's Contessa**, who won a 16-runner seller at Folkestone in October on her final turf attempt. She was later unplaced in three all-weather races. **Sizzling** scored at Bath (good to firm) last May and Leicester in October. He finished well beaten at Nottingham 10 days ago but will be much straighter for that outing – his first since Leicester. **Patsy Grimes**, successful over the minimum trip here in September, will not be far away if fit enough for her first outing since a good fourth to Chewit on the Equitrack in February. **Selection:** MERANTI

5.30 MORRISTON MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) (DIV II) £4,400 added 3YO 1m Penalty Value £3,590

1 622- APACHE LEN (USA) (184) (Roy Taiano) R Hannon 9 0 ... R Hughes 18
2 CLAIRE'S DANCER (Mrs Claire Hollowood) A Turnell 9 0 ... N Adams 15
3 0 DEVIL'S DANCE (FR) (20) (Sheikh Mohammed) M Stoute 9 0 ... J Reid 12
4 DILAZAR (USA) (Mana Al Maktoum) J Fanshawe 9 0 ... N Varley (3) 5
5 2 FORZA FIGLIO (12) (Grid Thoroughbred Racing) Miss Gay Kelleway 9 0 ... R Cochrane 10
6 04- JELALI (205) (The Fort Partnership) D Murray Smith 9 0 ... Paul Eddery 8
7 03 LAZALI (USA) (14) (Maktoum Al Maktoum) E Dunlop 9 0 ... M Hills 2
8 0 MANALOJ (USA) (15) (Hamdan Al Maktoum) P Walwyn 9 0 ... R Hills 4
9 6- MORNING SIR (199) (Rudy Park Syndicate) C R Barwell 9 0 ... D R McCabe (3) 6
10 0 NO-AMAN (14) (Hamdan Al Maktoum) W R Hern 9 0 ... W Carson 14
11 PHONETIC (Miss B Swire) G Balding 9 0 ... S Drowne (3) 13
12 00 SAM ROCKETT (12) (Miss Monica Campbell) C Horgan 9 0 ... A Clark 1
13 0- SAMUEL SCOTT (285) (Richard Green Fine Paintings) M Bell 9 0 ... M Fenton 9
14 5- UTMOST ZEAL (267) (Thanet Leasing Ltd and Mrs P Harris) P Harris 9 0 ... G Hind 7
15 2- DEGREE (232) (K Abdullah) H Cecil 8 9 ... W Ryan 3
16 5- TSARSKAYA (232) (Golden Arrow S A & Daniel Zigal) Mrs J Cecil 8 9 ... B Thomson 11
– 16 declared –

BETTING: 5-2 Degree, 5-1 Forza Figlio, 6-1 Apache Len, 8-1 Devil's Dance, Lazali, 9-1 Tsarskaya, 12-1 No-Aman, 14-1 Dilazar, Utmost Zeal, 16-1 others
1995: see division one

FORM GUIDE

Backward when beaten a length and a quarter by Wavey at Beverley in September on her only start, **DEGREE** is said to have improved from two to three years and the filly can land this for the Henry Cecil-Willie Ryan combination. **Forza Figlio** looks a big danger. He finished in front of Degree's odds-on stablemate Phantom House (fourth) when beaten half a length by Golden Ace on his introduction at Newbury 12 days ago. **Selection:** DEGREE

HAMILTON

HYPERION
2.10 Tribal Mischief 2.40 Maiteamia 3.10 *DOMICKSKY (nap)* 3.40 *Bobanlyn* 4.10 *Nizaal* 4.40 My Kind 5.10 Fabillion

GOING: Heavy (Soft in places).
STALLS: Stands' side except 1m & 1m1f (inside rail).
***DRAW ADVANTAGE:** High best for 1m to 1m 1f.*
■ Right-hand undulating course with pear-shaped loop.
■ Course is N of town on B7071. Hamilton West station (service from Glasgow) 1m. **ADMISSION:** Club £12; Grandstand and Paddock £7 (£4 for OAPs, disabled & students, £10 for couples); accompanied under-16s free all enclosures. **CAR PARK:** Free.

SIS RACING CHANNEL

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Gwespyr (visored 2.40), Aye Ready (3.40), Nizaal & Segala (4.10).
WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: None.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Our Kevin (2.10) & Mon Pere (4.40) have been sent 371 miles by K McAuliffe from Lambourn, Berkshire.

2.10 COATBRIDGE MAIDEN AUCTION STAKES (CLASS F) £3,450 added 2YO 5f

1 4 OUR KEVIN (20) K McAuliffe 8 5 ... J F Egan 2
2 APICULATE W Kemp 8 3 ... K Darley 4
3 22 I'M STILL HERE (21) (BF) J Berry 8 3 ... J Carroll 1
4 3 TRIBAL MISCHIEF (28) D Moffatt 8 2 ... Darren Moffatt (3) 3
5 2 SEASIDE (10) John Berry 8 0 ... T Williams 5
– 5 declared –

BETTING: Evens I'm Still Here, 7-2 Seaside, 9-2 Our Kevin, 5-1 Tribal Mischief, 20-1 Apiculate

2.40 LEVY BOARD HANDICAP (CLASS E) *£4,200 added 3YO 5f*

1 3-352 FRONTMAN (8) T D Barron 9 7 ... J Fortune 7
2 00-2014 GORETSKI (2) (D) N Tinkler 9 5 (7ex) ... K Darley 8
3 1453-60 GWESPYR (20) (D) J Berry 9 3 ... J Carroll 5 V
4 00-1201 MAITEAMIA (8) S Bowring 8 11 (7ex) ... C Teague (5) 9 B
5 00050- SWIFTY NIFTY (201) W Haigh 8 8 ... Dale Gibson 4
6 00-54 GOLDEN TYKE (8) M Johnston 8 4 ... T Williams 1
7 500-0 READY TEDDY (29) Miss L Perratt 7 11 ... J Fanning 2
8 4000-06 FINISTERRE (12) J J O'Neill 7 10 ... G Bardwell 3
9 0-00 AYE READY (23) Miss L Perratt 7 10 ... L Charnock 6 B
– 9 declared –

Minimum: 7st 10lb. True handicap weights: Finisterre 7st 8lb, Aye Ready 6st 12lb.
BETTING: 5-4 Goretski, 4-1 Maiteamia, 5-1 Frontman, 6-1 Golden Tyke, 10-1 Gwespyr, 16-1 Swifty Nifty, 20-1 others

3.10 LMLI YORKSHIRE FITTINGS HANDICAP (CLASS D) £5,500 added 6f

1 4235- DICTATION (212) J J O'Neill 4 10 0 ... G Duffield 2
2 100-000 BIRCHWOOD SUN (5) (CD) M Dods 6 9 0 ... J Carroll 5 B
3 10600-0 BLOW DRY (10) (CD) M Wane 5 8 9 ... J Fortune 14
4 064306 SO NATURAL (5) E Alston 4 8 8 ... S D Williams 3
5 5-06041 PANTHER (8) (CD) J Hetherton 6 8 3 ... D Wright (3) 8
6 413220 DESERT INVADER (23) (D) D Chapman 5 8 3 ... Dean McKeown 15
7 3-62006 DOMICKSKY (8) (D) M Channon 8 8 3 ... K Darley 7
8 114-000 LEADING PRINCESS (17) (CD) Miss L Perratt 5 8 2 ... P Fessey (5) 11 B
9 14100-0 SUEDORO (21) (CD) R McKellar 6 8 1 ... C Adamson (5) 6
10 600-006 CRAIGIE BOY (21) (CD) N Bycroft 6 7 13 ... T Williams 13 B
11 0500-02 MU-ARRIK (6) (D) G Oldroyd 8 7 10 ... G Bardwell 9 V
12 0200-60 MY GODSON (14) J L Eyre 6 7 10 ... N Kennedy 4 B
13 0-31530 BRIGANOONE (30) S Bowring 3 7 10 ... N Carlisle 1 B
14 /00/556- MILLEMAY (958) P Monteith 6 7 10 ... L Charnock 16
15 05600-0 SUNDAY MAIL TOO (23) (C) Miss L Perratt 4 7 10 ... J Fanning 12
16 000-000 RANKAIDADE (10) Don Enrico Incisa 5 7 10 ... Kim Tinkler 10
– 16 declared –

Minimum: 7st 10lb. True weights: Mu-Arrik 7st 5lb, My Godson 7st 4lb, Briganoone 7st 1lb, Millemay 6st 11lb, Sunday Mail Too 6st 10lb, Rankaidade 6st 7lb.
BETTING: 4-1 Panther, 6-1 Dictation, 7-1 Domicksky, 8-1 Briganoone, Mu-Arrik, 10-1 My Godson, 12-1 others

3.40 EAGLESHAM LIMITED STAKES (CLASS F) *£3,450 added 1m 1f 36yds*

1 216255 MR MORIARTY (8) S Bowring 5 9 3 ... C Teague (5) 10 B
2 000-0 ARABIAN FLIGHT (5) T Clement 4 8 11 ... D Wright (3) 14
3 500000/ BALATA BAY (989) J Baker 5 8 11 ... J Carroll 1
4 300-606 GIFTBOX (93) Sir Mark Prescott 4 8 11 ... G Duffield 9
5 404350 HAWWAM (15) E Alston *10 8 11* ... *S D Williams* 4
6 0550-00 JUST FLAMENCO (15) M Ryan 5 8 11 ... D Biggs 13
7 000/40-0 KIERCHEM (22) R Fisher 5 8 11 ... J Fortune 8
8 45240-6 KINDRED GREETING (76) D Morris 4 8 11 ... Doubtful 12 B
9 4400-02 NOBBY BARNES (5) (D) Don Enrico Incisa 7 8 11 ... Kim Tinkler 2
10 00000-0 PERCY PARROT (12) R Whitaker 4 8 11 ... A Culhane 7
11 350100/ PUBLIC WAY (593) (CD) N Chamberlain 6 8 11 ... Dean McKeown 17
12 0/60-413 RAINDEER QUEST (5) (C) J L Eyre 4 8 11 ... R Lappin 15
13 000-000 SHEROOT (28) D Moffatt 4 8 11 ... Darren Moffatt (3) 5
14 6030-00 TEE TEE TOO (8) A Harrison 4 8 11 ... Dale Gibson 16
15 000-030 WATERLORD (8) D Nicholls 6 8 11 ... Alex Greaves 11
16 0550-00 BOBANLYN (7) J Wainwright 4 8 8 ... L Charnock 6
17 340-000 PASH (5) C Fairhurst 4 8 8 ... N Kennedy 3 V
– 17 declared –

BETTING: 4-1 Nobby Barnes, 9-2 Raindeer Quest, 5-1 Mr Moriarty, 6-1 Just Flamenco, 8-1 Waterlord, 10-1 Giftbox, 12-1 Hawwam, 16-1 others

4.10 DRUMLOCH HANDICAP (CLASS E) £4,800 added *1m* 65yds

1 1/304-00 SEGALA (8) (CD) J J O'Neill 5 9 12 ... G Duffield 6 B
2 00325-4 SANDMOOR DENIM (8) (D) S Bowring 9 9 9 ... C Teague (5) 8
3 300-025 HEATHYARDS MAGIC (6) (BF) M Dods 4 9 4 ... J Carroll 2
4 36106-0 THREE ARCH BRIDGE (12) (CD) M Johnston 4 9 4 ... T Williams 9 B
5 000-000 NIZAAL (3) D Nicholls 5 9 4 ... Alex Greaves 13 B
6 05000-5 SCORPIUS (33) T Clement 6 8 10 ... K Darley 4
7 222/0-30 CHILLY LAD (15) (D) M Ryan 5 8 10 ... D Biggs 11 B
8 0606-35 BALLARD LADY (24) (D) (BF) J Wainwright 4 8 1 ... J F Egan 12
9 00-0000 ROAR ON TOUR (30) (D) Mrs M Reveley 7 7 13 ... L Charnock 1
10 000-004 BATTLE COLOURS (8) Don Enrico Incisa 7 7 10 ... Kim Tinkler 6
11 04320-2 PERSONIMUS (118) Capt J Wilson 6 7 10 ... P Fessey (5) 7
12 005600- HUTCHIES LADY (220) R McKellar 4 7 10 ... C Adamson (5) 14
13 0/66430- AMNESIA (311) (CD) Mrs S Bradburne 5 7 10 ... N Carlisle 3 V
14 000-000 STRATHTORE DREAM (8) Miss L Perratt 5 7 10 ... J Fanning 10
– 14 declared –

BETTING: 7-2 Sandmoor Denim, 6-1 Chilly Lad, Three Arch Bridge, 8-1 Segala, Heathyards Magic, Nizaal, 10-1 Personimus, 12-1 others

4.40 BELLSHILL CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS F) £3,450 added 3YO 1m 65yds

1 00 OLD HUSH WING (14) P Haslam 9 3 ... J Fortune 3
2 1 SHE'S A WINNER (29) (CD) P Monteith 9 2 ... L Charnock 5
3 0000- MON PERE (192) K McAuliffe 8 13 ... J F Egan 6
4 25-020 SUNLEY SECURE (9) M Channon 8 13 ... P P Murphy (5) 7
5 46-643 DANICO (7) S Williams 8 11 ... K Darley 1
6 50400-0 MY KIND (10) N Tinkler 8 4 ... Kim Tinkler 8
7 4000-00 AUTOFYR (23) J Wainwright 8 2 ... D Wright (3) 9
8 5500-00 PEARLS OF THOUGHT (29) J Haldane 7 12 ... Dale Gibson 4
9 0-30 PHAR CLOSER (3) W Kemp 7 12 ... P Fessey (5) 2
– 9 declared –

BETTING: 7-4 She's A Winner, 5-2 Sunley Secure, 5-1 Danico, 9-1 Mon Pere, My Kind, 16-1 Old Hush Wing, Pearls Of Thought, 20-1 others

5.10 EAST KILBRIDE HANDICAP (CLASS E) £4,800 added 1m 5f

1 24000-2 BAYRAK (5) (C) M Ryan 6 10 0 ... D Biggs 1
2 0226-51 FABILLION (10) C Smith 4 9 10 (5ex) ... Dean McKeown 10
3 2164-51 LORD HASTIE (21) (CD) C Thornton 8 9 9 ... O Pears (3) 11
4 000-052 SARAWAT (21) (BF) D Nicholls 8 9 7 ... Alex Greaves 4
5 2550-50 CUTTHROAT KID (21) (CD) Mrs M Reveley 6 9 4 ... K Darley 2 V
6 566/005 TURGENEV (21) R Bastiman 7 9 3 ... H Bastiman (5) 6 B
7 0/03-036 ROCK GROUP (16) J Pearce 4 8 13 ... G Bardwell 9
8 0/04-000 BOLD ELECT (8) (D) E Alston 8 8 2 ... S D Williams 5
9 430/633 PALACE OF GOLD (21) L Lungo 6 7 11 ... J Fanning 12
10 032440 THORNTOUN ESTATE (6) M Johnston 3 7 10 ... T Williams 13
11 558600 KISMETIM (28) D Chapman 6 7 10 ... L Charnock 8
12 0604/5 LOSTRIS (22) M Dods 5 7 10 ... N Kennedy 3
13 04220-0 DON'T CRY (22) Don Enrico Incisa 8 7 10 ... Kim Tinkler 7
– 13 declared –

Minimum weight: 7st 10lb. True handicap weights: Thorntoun Estate 7st 9lb, Kismetim 7st 8lb, Lostris 7st 5lb, Don't Cry 6st 4lb.
BETTING: 7-2 Sarawat, 4-1 Lord Hastie, 5-1 Fabillion, Cutthroat Kid, 7-1 Bayrak, 8-1 Palace Of Gold, 12-1 Rock Group, 16-1 others

WOLVERHAMPTON

HYPERION
2.20 Dancing Star 2.50 Cretan Gift (nb) 3.20 Miss Offset 3.50 Carol Again 4.20 Sweet Amoret 4.50 Perfect Brave

GOING: Standard. **STALLS:** Inside.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: High from 6f to 1m 4f.
■ Fibresand, left-hand, oval course.
■ Course is N of town on A449. Station 1m. **ADMISSION:** Club £15; Tattersalls £6 (OAP members of Diamond Club £4); Restaurant £25.90 including entrance and meal. **CAR PARK:** free.

SIS

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: C-Harry (visored) (2.20); Sweet Nature (3.20); Zaaleff (3.50); Driftholme (visored), Chillington (4.20).
WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: Palacegate Touch (2.50) won at Carlisle on Friday; Cretan Gift (2.50) won here on Saturday; Miss Offset (3.20) won at Southwell on Monday.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Burberry Quest (2.20) has been sent 154 miles by B R Millman from Kentisbeare, Devon.

2.20 SLOANE MAIDEN AUCTION STAKES (CLASS F) £3,450 added 2YO 5f

1 4 YOUNG BIGWIG (14) J Berry 8 10 ... G Carter 10
2 COURT HOUSE B McMahon 8 7 ... L Newton (5) 11
3 JUST LOUI W G M Turner 8 7 ... J Weaver 2
4 4302 C-HARRY (8) R Hollinshead 8 5 ... F Lynch (5) 4 V
5 2362 HELLO DOLLY (9) (BF) K Burke 8 2 ... J Tate 8
6 JINGOIST M Johnston 8 2 ... P Robinson 9
7 COLINS CHOICE J Spearing 8 0 ... Iona Wands (7) 6
8 0 BURBERRY QUEST (38) B R Millman 7 12 ... F Norton 1
9 3436 CAVIAR AND CANDY (12) (BF) D Cosgrove 7 12 ... J Quinn 7
10 4255 DANCING STAR (6) P Evans 7 12 ... A Mackay 3 V
11 3 WHO TOLD VICKY (9) J Moore 7 12 ... M Baird (5) 8
– 11 declared –

BETTING: 3-1 Young Bigwig, 7-2 Jingoist, 5-1 Just Loui, 7-1 Hello Dolly, 8-1 C-Harry, Court House, 10-1 others

2.50 GROSVENOR CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS F) £3,450 added 6f

1 422201 CRETAN GIFT (5) (CD) N Littmoden 5 9 11 ... T G McLaughlin 1 B
2 5040-01 PALACEGATE TOUCH (8) (D) J Berry 6 9 11 ... G Carter 5 B
3 000510 LITTLE IBNR (10) (CD) P Evans 5 9 7 ... Amanda Sanders (5) 4
4 210-602 INTIAASH (5) (D) D Haydn Jones 4 9 6 ... Anthony Bond (7) 10
5 60-2244 MUSTN'T GRUMBLE (10) (D) Miss S Wilton 6 9 6 ... F Norton 7
6 522043 AT THE SAVOY (8) (D) Mrs L Stubbs 5 9 5 ... J Weaver 6 B
7 531050 BOLD ARISTOCRAT (6) (D) R Hollinshead 5 9 3 ... F Lynch (5) 3
8 213655 DAHIYAH (20) (D) G L Moore 5 9 2 ... S Whitworth 8 V
9 0500-00 WARDARA (10) (D) C Dwyer 4 9 0 ... J Stack (3) 2 B
10 0666- PRINCESS RENATA (280) R Harris 3 8 10 ... A Mackay 9
– 10 declared –

BETTING: 2-1 Cretan Gift, 7-2 Palacegate Touch, 6-1 Mustn't Grumble, 7-1 Intiaash, 8-1 Little Ibnr, Dahiyah, 12-1 At The Savoy, 14-1 others

3.20 MAYFAIR FILLIES HANDICAP (CLASS D) £5,100 added 3YO 6f

1 2430-11 SPLICING (15) (D) W Haggas 9 7 ... W Woods 1
2 3010-40 SWEET NATURE (15) (CD) W Jarvis 8 11 ... J Weaver 5 B
3 430-4 FYORS GIFT (9) B Hanbury 8 4 ... J Stack (3) 7
4 114321 MISS OFFSET (3) (CD) M Johnston 8 4 (7ex) ... P Robinson 4 B
5 05400-4 LIMERICK PRINCESS (8) J Berry 8 1 ... G Carter 3
6 2R320-2 AGAIN TOGETHER (40) G L Moore 7 11 ... J Quinn 2
7 045001 NAPIER STAR (8) (D) Mrs N Macauley 7 10 (7ex) ... Iona Wands (7) 6
– 7 declared –

Minimum weight: 7st 10lb. True handicap weight: Napier Star 6st 6lb.
BETTING: 7-4 Splicing, 3-1 Fyors Gift, 5-1 Miss Offset, 6-1 Limerick Princess, 8-1 Sweet Nature, 14-1 Again Together, 25-1 Napier Star

3.50 BERKELEY HANDICAP (CLASS E) £4,400 added *1m 4f*

1 00/4311- RED PHANTOM (271) (C) (D) S Mellor 4 10 0 ... M Wigham 12
2 150100- CANTON VENTURE (201) (CD) S Woods 4 9 7 ... W Woods 2
3 460-621 CUBAN NIGHTS (33) (CD) B Llewellyn 4 9 5 ... J Weaver 4
4 000-621 IN THE MONEY (30) (CD) R Hollinshead 7 9 0 ... F Lynch (5) 6
5 00-00 ZAALEFF (10) B Hanbury 4 8 12 ... J Stack (3) 11 B
6 134-350 CHARLIE BIGTIME (29) (CD) R Harris 6 8 9 ... A Mackay 3
7 046010 CAPTAIN MARMALADE (16) D Thom 7 8 5 ... J Tate 8 V
8 023511 CAROL AGAIN (8) (D) N Bycroft 4 7 12 ... J Quinn 10
9 353251 COMTEC'S LEGEND (22) (CD) J Bottomley 5 7 10 ... M Baird (5) 7
10 0000/5-0 CULRAIN (5) T Caldwell 5 7 10 ... Angela Gallimore (7) 1
11 0006/ KUTAN (1015) Mrs B Waring 6 7 10 ... F Norton 9 B
12 03000-4 BRESIL (20) K Burke 7 7 10 ... Iona Wands (7) 5
– 12 declared –

Minimum: 7st 10lb. True weights: Culrain 7st 7lb, Kutan 7st 2lb, Bresil 6st 13lb.
BETTING: 2-1 Carol Again, 9-2 Cuban Nights, 5-1 In The Money, 7-1 Red Phantom, 8-1 Canton Venture, 10-1 Captain Marmalade, 12-1 others

4.20 MANCHESTER SELLING STAKES (CLASS G) £3,000 added 3YO 1m 4f

1 0-50 CHILLINGTON (16) W Brisbourne 8 11 ... D Griffiths (5) 3 B
2 0-55200 CRYSTAL FAST (20) P Kelleway 8 11 ... C Domergue (7) 2
3 0-500 HEVER GOLF DIAMOND (10) T J Naughton 8 11 ... T Ashley (7) 11
4 36 NORDIC HERO (6) A Jarvis 8 11 ... J Tate 4
5 0-6 PEARL ANNIVERSARY (5) M Johnston 8 11 ... J Weaver 5
6 000-030 SHAMAND (3) B Meehan 8 11 ... M Tebbutt 8
7 000-51 SWEET AMORET (19) (C) P Howling 8 11 ... F Norton 9
8 0- WATER CHESTNUT (178) Mrs N Macauley 8 11 ... Amanda Sanders (5) 7
9 0-0 BALMORAL PRINCESS (19) J Pearce 8 6 ... J Stack (3) 6
10 000-3 DRIFTHOLME (40) G L Moore 8 6 ... S Whitworth 1 V
11 PANDORA'S GIFT K Burke 8 6 ... J Quinn 10
– 11 declared –

BETTING: 5-2 Sweet Amoret, 7-2 Driftholme, 5-1 Crystal Fast, 7-1 Hever Golf Diamond, 8-1 Pandora's Gift, 10-1 Pearl Anniversary, 12-1 others

4.50 PORTMAN HANDICAP (CLASS E) £4,200 added 5f

1 1030-02 PERFECT BRAVE (23) J Balding 5 10 0 ... J Edmunds (7) 3
2 324143 THE INSTITUTE BOY (8) (D) Miss J Craze 6 9 13 ... J Weaver 2
3 2445-23 LADY SHERIFF (12) (D) R Hollinshead 5 9 11 ... F Lynch (5) 5
4 223100 RENNYHOLME (5) (CD) J Hetherton 5 9 6 ... S Whitworth 7 B
5 3435-54 TEE-EMM (5) (D) P Howling 6 9 4 ... J Quinn 9
6 030-230 DISCO BOY (9) (CD) P Evans 5 9 4 ... W J O'Connor 8 B
7 354034 SIR TASKER (10) (CD) J L Harris 8 9 0 ... W Woods 4 V
8 000010 HIGHLAND FAWN (9) (CD) B McMahon 3 8 9 ... G Carter 6
9 06-0400 DAANIERA (19) (D) P Howling 6 8 4 ... F Norton 1
– 9 declared –

BETTING: 9-4 Lady Sheriff, 3-1 The Institute Boy, 9-2 Perfect Brave, 7-1 Highland Fawn, 8-1 Sir Tasker, 10-1 Tee-Emm, 12-1 others

RACING RESULTS

ASCOT

2.30: 1. DISTANT OASIS (W Ryan) 11-4; **2. Tawaaded** 7-2; **3. Satin Bell** 5-2 fav. 6 ran. 2½, 1. (H Cecil, Newmarket). Tote: £3.50; £1.50, £2.20. Dual Forecast: £5.60. Computer Straight Forecast: £11.98.

3.05: 1. DOUBLE TRIGGER (J Weaver) 11-8 fav; **2. Grey Shot** 5-1; **3. Always Aloof** 16-1. 7 ran. Hd, 7. (M Johnston, Middleham). Tote: £2.20; £1.40, £1.80. DF: £3.50. CSF: £7.86. Trio: £16.00. NRs: Assessor, Safety In Numbers.

3.40: 1. YEAST (R Cochrane) 8-1; **2. Master Charter** 13-2 fav; **3. Prince Babar** 20-1; **4. Emerging Market** 20-1. 24 ran. 1, shl hd. (W Haggas, Newmarket). Tote: £9.80; £2.50, £1.90, £4.40, £4.30. Dual Forecast: £24.70. Computer Straight Forecast: £57.84. Tricast: £976.00. Trio: £172.10.

4.10: 1. SMOKEY PETE (J Reid) 6-4 fav; **2. Bilko** 5-2; **3. Kingsinger** 9-2. 6 ran. Nk, 1. (R Hannon, East Everleigh). Tote: £2.50; £1.40, £1.30. DF: £2.80. CSF: £5.48. NR: Enchanting Eve.

4.40: 1. TARAWA (R Hughes) 5-4 fav; **2. Behaviour** 12-1; **3. Green Green Desert** 10-1. 8 ran. ½, nk. (N Callaghan, Newmarket). Tote: £2.30; £1.20, £2.70, £2.00. DF: £10.10. CSF: £15.49.

5.15: 1. TREGARON (T Quinn) 5-1; **2. Samba Sharply** 20-1; **3. Angus-G** 9-2 fav; **4. Autumn Cover** *16-1. 31 ran.* 3½, ¾. (R Akehurst, Epsom). Tote: £6.70; £2.20, £10.60, £1.90, £4.50. DF: £399.50. CSF: £114.16. Tricast: £491.36. Trio: £987.70. NR: Captain's Day. After a stewards' inquiry, placings unaltered.

Jackpot: £5,278.20.
Placepot: £61.00. **Quadpot:** £15.70.
Place 6: £42.06. **Place 5:** £14.45.

EXETER

2.20: 1. POLLY LEACH (D Salter) 9-2 fav; **2. Eleanora Muse** 15-2; **3. Mr Poppleton** 12-1. 14 ran. 14, 6. (B R Millman). Tote: £6.20; £2.00, £1.70, £3.30. DF: £15.40. CSF: £36.55. Tricast: £356.51. Trio: £128.20.

2.55: 1. COXWELL STEPTOE (J F Titley) 6-2 fav; **2. Peter Monamy** 4-1; **3. Sian Wyn** 9-2. 15 ran. 21, 16. (Miss H Knight). Tote: £3.50; £1.60, £2.70, £1.80. DF: £8.00. CSF: £13.64. Trio: £12.10. NRs: Alpine Storm, Faraday, What's The Joke.

3.30: 1. LEMON'S MILL (C Maude) 11-8 fav; **2. Maremma Gale** 12-1; **3. Buzz O'The Crowd** 50-1. *12 ran.* 21, 3½. (M Pipe). Tote: £2.20; £1.30, £2.20, £6.00. DF: £36.10. CSF: £19.14. Trio: £171.90.

4.00: 1. HOLDIMCLOSE (J Frost) 8-1; **2. Harry The Horse** 10-1; **3. Uncle Algy** 14-1. 13 ran. 9-4 fav Halona (fell). 8, 13. (R Frost). Tote: £9.90; £2.20, £3.60, £4.50. DF: £52.60. CSF: £80.64. Trio: £69.30.

4.30: 1. SUPER TACTICS (Mr P Henley) 5-1; **2. Jailbreaker** 8-1; **3. Reve En Rose** 9-4 fav. 7 ran. 5, 14. (R Alner). Tote: £5.70; £2.10, £2.60. DF: £19.00. CSF: £39.53. Tricast: £104.49. Trio: £10.70. NRs: Mr Entertainer, Muskora.

5.00: 1. RAMALLAH (R Greene) 12-1; **2. Elatefaal** 20-1; **3. Sheep Stealer** 3-1 jt-fav. *15 ran. 3-1 jt-fav Tellicherry (4th).* 9, 3. (J White). Tote: £16.40; £3.00, £7.70, £2.30. DF: £85.20. CSF: £221.93. Tricast: £844.95. Trio: £125.20. NR: Mustahil.

5.30: 1. LORD MCMURROUGH (R Farrant) 9-4; **2. Sands Point** 12-1; **3. Slingsby** 2-1 fav. 12 ran. 8, 7. (J Neville, Newport). Tote: £3.40; £1.20, £3.10, £1.70. DF: £40.10. CSF: £28.88. Trio: £18.80.

Placepot: £1,536.50. **Quadpot:** £316.80.
Place 6: £911.48. **Place 5:** £331.94.

PLUMPTON

2.10: 1. WILTOSKI (Mrs N Ledger) 9-1; **2. Imola** 14-1; **3. Khatir** 5-2. 10 ran. 9-4 fav *Joli's Great (4th).* 4, 3. (R Ledger). Tote: £11.60; £2.50, £3.50, £1.30. DF: £40.70. CSF: £114.87. Trio: £85.60.

2.45: 1. EVANGELICA (D Bridgwater) 2-5 fav; **2. Brindley House** 12-1; **3. Duke Of Lancaster** 100-30. 5 ran. 3½, nk. (M Pipe). Tote: £1.30; £1.10, £2.50. Dual Forecast: £4.70. Computer Straight Forecast: £5.50.

3.20: 1. CHIEFTAIN'S CROWN (A Lamach) 2-1; **2. Circus Colours** 2-1; **3. Wild Strawberry** 7-4 fav. 3 ran. ½, 18. (Miss K George). Tote: £2.30. Dual Forecast: £2.00. Computer Straight Forecast: £5.15. NR: Royal Circus.

3.50: 1. OH SO HANDY (D Walsh) 11-10 fav; **2. Victory Anthem** 7-2; **3. Upward Surge** 20-1. 4 ran. 10, 26. (R Curtis). Tote: £2.20. DF: £3.80. Computer Straight Forecast: £4.98. NR: Wrappers Delight.

4.20: 1. BRASSIC LINT (D Bridgwater) 6-1; **2. Equity's Darling** 3-1 jt-fav; **3. Clock Watchers** 14-1. 7 ran. 3-1 jt-fav Fabriana (4th). 4, 8. (J Neville). Tote: £6.10; £2.40, £2.90. Dual Forecast: £16.10. Computer Straight Forecast: £24.08.

4.50: 1. TONYS GIFT (D Bridgwater) 6-4; **2. Pedaltothemetal** evens fav; **3. Maronetta** 12-1. 7 ran. 6, 8. (M Pipe). Tote: £2.10; £1.60, £1.10. Dual Forecast: £1.40. Computer Straight Forecast: £3.21.

Placepot: £31.40. **Quadpot:** £19.90.
Place 6: £81.46. **Place 5:** £16.00.

CHELTENHAM

5.25: 1. MY NOMINEE (Mr A Griffith) 9-1; **2. Mr Golightly** 11-10 fav; **3. Synderborough Lad** 7-2. 9 ran. hd, dist. (D Nicholls). Tote: £7.50; £1.80, £1.40, £1.80. DF: £6.20. CSF: £17.88. Trio: £9.20.

6.00: 1. DOUBLE SILK (Mr R Treloggen) 10-11 fav; **2. Rusty Bridge** 16-1; **3. My Mellow Man** 20-1. 11 ran. 18, 9. (R Wilkins). Tote: £1.90; £1.70, £2.80, £3.60. DF: £12.70. CSF: £15.75. Trio: £16.80.

6.35: 1. RYMING CUPLET (Mr Richard White) 7-1; **2. Sheer Jest** 6-4 fav; **3. West Quay** 6-1. 13 ran. 2½, 16. (M Trickey). Tote: £9.60; £2.20, £1.90, £1.90. DF: £8.20. CSF: £16.81. Trio: £24.30.

7.10: 1. YOUNG BRAVE (Mr M G Miller) 8-11 fav; **2. Churden** 7-1; **3. Ryde Again** 7-4. 3 ran. 1½, dist. (Mrs A Young). Tote: £1.70. DF: £2.20. CSF: £4.27.

KELSO

5.45: 1. CRYSTAL GIFT (B Harding) 2-1 fav; **2. Arctic Sandy** 5-2; **3. Adamatic** 5-1. 14 ran. 2, 5. (A Whillans). Tote: £2.20; £1.20, £1.60, £2.40. DF: £5.40. CSF: £7.09. Trio: £3.60. NRs: Hya Prim, Mary's Case, Silver Pearl, Stanwick Fort, Tewafi.

6.15: 1. BRIAR'S DELIGHT (L Wyer) 10-3; **2. Rebel King** 11-2; **3. Movac** 5-2. 8 ran. 6-4 fav Grouse-N-Heather (slipped up). 12, 10. (R Allan). Tote: £4.50; £1.80, £2.70. DF: £9.60. CSF: £20.26. Trio: £8.80. NRs: Boethius, Boring, Lochnagrain, St Elmo's Fire. After an objection by the clerk of the scales, Ord Gallery, who finished 3rd, was disqualified as his rider failed to weigh in.

6.50: 1. GLENUGIE (N Bentley) 9-1; **2. Direct Route** 7-4 fav; **3. Cittadino** 15-8. 6 ran. Hd, nk. (G M Moore). Tote: £7.30; £2.60, £1.40. DF: £4.10. CSF: £24.55. Tricast: £38.90. Trio: £25.80. NRs: Eurolink The Rebel, Fiindock, Fourth In Line, Sharkashka, Well Appointed.

■ Several jump jockeys were injured in three separate incidents at Exeter and another at Plumpton yesterday. Dean Gallagher, Simon Burrough, Denis Leahy and Brendan Powell were all feeling the worse for wear after being ditched by their mounts. Leahy and Gallagher fared the worst – ending the day with suspected broken collar-bones. Gallagher will be X-rayed today to ascertain the extent of his injuries following a fall from Little Tom in the Preston Park Handicap Chase at Plumpton. Denis Leahy sustained a suspected broken left collar-bone after taking a crashing fall from Halona in the Royal Navy NH Novices' Hurdle at Exeter. Brendan Powell gave up his remaining rides after falling at the twelfth fence from Sydney Barry in the Portman Instant Access Handicap Chase at the same track. And Simon Burrough was taken to Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital for precautionary X-rays after being kicked in the back when falling from High Post in the First Time Buyer Novices' Selling Hurdle.

sport

THE ENGLAND SUCCESSION: The Football Association has taken a bold step in opting for an inexperienced manager

Hoddle to rely on players' respect

Glenn Moore considers the prospect of England selecting its youngest coach

It is a risk, but it is a justified one for the doubt is not about the the man, but the timing.

At 38, Glenn Hoddle would be the youngest manager-coach England have had. He has just five years' managerial experience and has won nothing more substantial than promotion to the Premiership. Already Don Howe, arguably the most experienced coach in the game, has wondered aloud if Hoddle will feel he is ready.

It is a valid question but, in plumping for Hoddle, the Football Association have chosen potential rather than achievement. They hope he will emulate Franz Beckenbauer, who led his country to World Cup success in his first management job. A less encouraging precedent comes from France, where Michel Platini's initially promising stewardship ended in failure at the last European Championships.

The irony is that the FA, in putting their faith in Hoddle, have made a decision their managers refused to take when he was a player. Hoddle, though the most extravagantly gifted midfielder of his generation, was never successfully harnessed to the England team. He won 53 caps but rarely played in his position of choice, roving the centre of midfield. He was thus unable to make the mark upon the international stage that he could have.

However, it did not stop him becoming one of the most admired players of his era. Read any of those instant profiles of footballers and, to the question "favourite player as a boy" the answer will invariably be "Glenn Hoddle". Not just in England either, a whole generation of Dutch players grew up admiring him and many of his contemporaries, in England and Europe, accord Hoddle a rare respect.

Having such a reputation helps when trying to inspire, cajole or instruct international players, who can have big egos and wallets to match. Terry Venables has it, that is evident in the way the players listen to him, and the way they work on his ideas on the training ground. The previous incumbent, Graham Taylor, did not command respect so easily and seemed uncomfortable handling the most talented players, like Paul Gascoigne and Chris Waddle.

Hoddle is at ease with such players and they look up to him, even Ruud Gullit, who Hoddle not only attracted to Chelsea but also persuaded that he should not play at sweeper. Instead Hoddle has played David Lee in that position, bringing the best from a player who had languished in Chelsea's reserves. He has also promoted Michael Duberry who, with the Nevilles, has emerged as the best young defender in the country.

In midfield, Dennis Wise has flourished and John Spencer has been convinced, against his initial judgement, that his best position is just behind the centre-forward, not leading the attack.

They each fit into a system which is more Continental than English. Three central defenders, wing-backs on the flanks of a flooded midfield and, usually, a lone striker. When it all clicks, as against Middlesbrough early this year, it is a treat to watch. Hoddle's commitment to the system is such that all Chelsea's teams play that way, right down to the youth sides. It means when young players like Duberry, or Jody Morris, come into the side the adjustment is that much easier.

While similar to Venables' vision it is not as advanced. The England team which played Croatia was genuinely European in approach with attacking midfielders on the flanks, not defenders, and a sweeper behind two mobile markers, rather than three centre-backs.

Maybe, with the better players available to England, Hoddle would also adopt such an approach. His assessment of players has improved – early transfer mistakes like Paul Furlong and Mark Stein have been followed by the successful signing of Dan Petrescu and Terry Phelan.

There is the criticism that, as yet, he has won nothing. But the ability to win the League is not necessarily what is required for England – look at Don Revie's respective records for club and country. National management is about winning a series of one-off matches culminating, hopefully, in an intense but short tournament. Hoddle has shown, through Chelsea's successful cup runs at home and in Europe, and, earlier, through Swindon's success in the play-offs, that he has the ability to organise teams for specific tasks.

It could be good news for Matthew Le Tissier, another player inspired by Hoddle as a youngster but one of the few with similar ability. Hoddle himself was regarded as a special talent from the moment he fired past Peter Shilton from 25 yards on his Tottenham debut in 1976.

He also scored a stunning goal on his England debut against Bulgaria three years later but was then dropped for the next matches. It was the story of his England career.

At White Hart Lane, he attained the status of a legend and an FA Cup winners' medal. After 11 years, and more than a century of goals, he moved to Monaco where he won the French championship in his second year. In 1991 he became player-manager of Swindon. After two successful years he moved on to Chelsea.

Despite early struggles, Hoddle refused to modify his playing style and he has been rewarded with the creation of a stylish side which has engendered real optimism at Stamford Bridge.

Should he take the national job, the self-belief he showed in that first season will be vital. Chris Waddle, his former Spurs team-mate and singing partner, said: "He's very determined and sticks to his beliefs. He is bound to get criticised but I think he is big enough to handle it."

He will need to be because criticism, both personal and professional, goes with the job. There will be intense scrutiny of his private life – he may have become a dedicated Christian but, as David Ginola found at the weekend, there are newspapers which do not mind rattling skeletons from a decade ago, even innocent ones.

There will also be criticism – often uninformed – of his team. This is the danger in the FA going for someone who, to an extent, will be learning on the job. He has the ability to become a good England manager but it may take time to be translated into results. Where England are concerned, time is not available.

Glenn Hoddle has established his big match managerial ability in Chelsea's Cup runs Photograph: Brendan Monks

HODDLE FACT FILE

1957: 27 Oct, born Hayes, Middlesex.
1976: Scores on debut (Tottenham) but against Stoke City.
1979: Scores on England debut against Bulgaria in European Championship qualifier at Wembley, the first of eight England goals.
1981: FA Cup winner's medal.
1982: Scores in FA Charity Shield, final replay against Queen's Park Rangers, collect second winner's medal.
1984: Uefa Cup winner's medal.
1987: Moves to Monaco for £750,000, French title medal with 32 goals.
1988: Last of 53 England caps, in 3-1 defeat by USSR in European Championship finals in Germany.
1991: Appointed player-manager of Swindon Town in April.
1993: Scores first goal in 4-3 play-off win against Leicester that takes Swindon into Premiership; a month later Hoddle quits to take over at Chelsea.
1994: Chelsea FA Cup finalists.
1995: Plays last game; sig's Ruud Gullit from Sampdoria.
1996: Chelsea FA Cup semi-finalists.

Excessive burden of expectation

Ken Jones argues that the national coach has an almost impossible job

Doubtless Glenn Hoddle will bear in mind that managing England is not a job, it is a responsibility. It means less of a private life, ringing telephones, arrogant assumptions and coming under the pontifical scrutiny of amateur strategists.

It means attempting to restore a reputation that exists only in the minds of blinkered patriots; 30 years since England won the World Cup, nothing either side of that achievement. And never mind the technical flaws, the British cultural divisions evident in great club teams, who has been held to blame? The managers.

Constrained by autocratic selectors who were not above applying quite ludicrous regional bias, England's first manager, Walter Winterbottom resigned in 1962, unable to get beyond the quarter-final stage in four World Cups. Alf Ramsey, the fêted hero of 1966, was fired six months after failing to qualify for the 1974 finals in West Germany.

> Anybody who even considers the job is a suitable case for treatment

Less than a year into his term of office, Don Revie, who had built Leeds into one of Europe's most feared teams, was conceding privately that he had taken on an impossible task. "I got carried away, simply didn't pay enough attention to the fact of how many important players in the First Division wouldn't be available to me as manager of the England team," Revie admitted. "I'm scraping the barrel and it will be a miracle if we qualify [for the 1978 finals]."

Soon after it became obvious that England would not get through, suspecting that it was only a matter of time before he was sacked, Revie took off scandalously for the Middle East without bothering to inform his employers.

Ron Greenwood restored respectability to a role he should have been considered for earlier, and got England to the last eight in the 1982 finals before handing over to Bobby Robson.

It was during Robson's tenure that the task of managing England became one nobody should consider without first demanding a heat shield. Forced to withstand probes into his personal life and a mounting flood of criticism, Robson had aged perceptibly by the time Argentina put England out of the 1986 finals in Mexico. He hung on, and despite tactical blunders in the early rounds, he came within a penalty shoot-out of the final in Italy four years later.

Of all the appointments in sport, few carry such an overwhelming sense of national responsibility as being manager of England and it proved too much for Robson's successor, Graham Taylor. In attempting to refine the direct method he favoured as a club manager, Taylor got lost, his teams neither one thing or another, the subsequent vilification brutal.

Particularly as he was a member of Robson's squad, Hoddle is acquainted with the weight of expectation borne by managers of the national team. To my mind anybody who even considers the job is a suitable case for treatment but in fact this may be the right time in Hoddle's career to succeed Terry Venables.

History emphasises that football clubs are notoriously fickle. There are no guarantees. A hero one season, a victim the next. Plenty of praise has come Hoddle's way for the Ruud Gullit-inspired football Chelsea have played this season but it only got them as far as the FA Cup semi-finals and a mid-table place in the Premiership. There is the matter of dissent in the boardroom, too. How deeply does Ken Bates resent the fact that Hoddle appeared to side with his rival, Matthew Harding?

Thinking practically, it would be unlikely to affect Hoddle's career a great deal if things did not work out for him with England, less I think than if they went wrong for him at Chelsea.

If, as seems probable, Hoddle takes over the national team, one of the things for him to guard against will be the usual glut of mindless presumptions. "Tel wants England to play like Brazil," bellowed one of our popular prints when Venables, who remains unquestionably the best man for the job, was appointed.

Another is the suggestion that it would be an advantage to have Gullit at his side. A great player, an intelligent man, a wise head, but too big a personality.

Premiership may go to penalties

NICK DUXBURY

Kevin Keegan and Alex Ferguson will find themselves well within shouting distance should a play-off be needed to decide the Premiership title.

The two managers, whose relationship has soured as the pressure has grown, will find themselves lining up at the head of their teams in the Wembley tunnel on Thursday, 16 May, if Manchester United and Newcastle United remain deadlocked after Sunday's final games.

The play-off, which has a fall-back date of Tuesday, 21 May, should the FA Cup final need a replay, will have extra time and penalties if necessary. Ticket prices will range from £10 to £25, with each club receiving an allocation of 36,000.

Keegan, who on Monday was stinging in his criticism of Ferguson, yesterday kept his thoughts to himself as Newcastle prepared for tonight's match at Nottingham Forest where Newcastle could break an 87-year record and draw level on points with United.

They are looking to make it four clean sheets in a row – and the club have not done that since they won the championship in 1908-1909.

Keegan faces a selection problem with David Ginola ready to return after a one-match suspension. The Frenchman looks almost certain to play which leaves his manager with a straight choice between record buy Faustino Asprilla and Keith Gillespie, who scored the winner against Leeds on Monday.

"The manager has made no promises to me," Gillespie said. "I'll just have to wait until a couple of hours before kick-off like everybody else."

The England defender Steve Howey will miss the match because of a hamstring injury but could still be fit to face Tottenham in the season's finale on Sunday.

It is a different story for Steve Bruce. The Manchester United captain and centre-back, who has not played since tearing a hamstring a fortnight ago, will play no part in their final game Middlesbrough.

"Steve is out of the running for Sunday," Ferguson said. "There is no question about that. He hasn't done any running in training and he's still only just getting treatment."

Ferguson, who holds out some hope of Bruce making the Cup final against Liverpool on 11 May, had better news of Eric Cantona, the Frenchman having overcome a hip injury.

Queen's Park Rangers may have been relegated to the First Division but they showed they are still looking to the future by signing Carlisle's 19-year-old midfield player Paul Murray for an initial fee of £300,000. Murray has been on loan to the Premiership club since March. The fee could rise to £750,000 subject to appearances.

Gascoigne wins writers' award

If Paul Gascoigne wins the lottery this weekend, nobody will bat an eyelid. The Rangers midfielder was yesterday voted player of the season for 1995-96 by the Scottish Football Writers' Association, adding the title to the one awarded on Sunday night by the Scottish Professional Footballers' Association.

Gascoigne has scored 19 goals in his debut season at Rangers since his club record £4.3m move from Lazio, and his hat-trick against Aberdeen on Sunday clinched an eighth successive title for the Ibrox club, and his first championship medal.

"It is special to be named player of the year by the football writers, some of whom have been my biggest critics since moving to Scotland," said Gascoigne, who will receive the award on 12 May.

"I know how prestigious the award is in England, although I never won it there. Added to winning the vote of my fellow professionals, this confirms I have proved to everyone how good a player I am. The writers see games week in week out, so it is great to get their vote."

Gascoigne edged the SFWA verdict just ahead of Pierre Van Hooijdonk, who has scored 32 goals for Celtic this season.

The Rangers midfielder succeeds team-mate Brian Laudrup by scooping both awards in Scotland and is the second Englishman named by the writers, following Mark Hateley's success in 1994.

Gascoigne now has the Scottish Cup final against Hearts on 18 May and the European Championships in June to further enhance his footballing rehabilitation since his return from a troubled spell in Italy.

"I'm looking forward to Hampden and the cup final, and then playing against Scotland at Wembley," he said. "It would be nice to beat Scotland but I don't want to give them a hiding. Remember, I've to come back and go into Ibrox every day."

Gascoigne picked out two highlights from his first season in Scotland – both from Old Firm confrontations – and promised to be better prepared for Rangers' next campaign.

"The high points were beating Celtic at Parkhead last September when I scored in our 2-0 win, and beating Celtic again in the cup semi-final last month," the former Tottenham and Newcastle midfielder said.

"But the absolute summit for me was last Sunday. To score a hat-trick in the game that wins you the league could only be topped if England won Euro 96 or the World Cup.

"I'm sure I can be even better next season as I will know what to expect every time I go out in terms of the size of grounds, the state of surfaces and crowd banter."

His week's winnings also include the goal of the season for his effort against Hibernian on 30 December and the Bell's player of the month award for April.

Neath recover their prestige with breathtaking new style

Steve Bale on the revival of Pontypridd's opponents in Saturday's Swalec Cup final

The statistics of Neath's return to eminence in Welsh rugby are not quite as breathtaking as the rugby that has caused them. But even so, they tell an astonishing story of how the youngest team representing Wales' oldest club stormed towards Saturday's Swalec Cup final against Pontypridd. The also lead the Heineken League.

In fact, Cardiff are well-placed to remove Neath from the top by the time an attenuated season ends on 14 May, but the transformation from try-shy anti-heroes – remember the Springboks' visit – into a try-scoring phenomenon in one season has been a rapturous affirmation of rugby in all its glory.

Who would have believed it that the team everyone beyond The Gnoll loved to hate is now so widely admired? Last season Neath amassed all of 33 tries in their 22 First Division fixtures. This season the aggregate is already 104, still with two games to go. But for an uncertain beginning when a callow bunch of youngsters were familiarising themselves with each other and their new-wave rugby, the title would by now be theirs.

Still, the cup would be more than mere consolation if Cardiff do the expected. "This is already a successful season, and we haven't won anything yet," Neath's coach, Darryl Jones, said yesterday. "We have developed a pattern of rugby with young people who are ready to take us forward playing this way for the next five years.

"My policy has never been anything but to play fast and open rugby and I'm happy to say this is the type of rugby that suits the players we have. After all, you can only play the game if you have the players able and willing to do it."

This is less of a cliché than it sounds. There is not a coach in the land who does not notionally embrace "fast and open rugby", but then its implementation is another matter. The point about Jones is that he has already spent a quarter of a century successfully implementing this ambition as a schoolmaster; his triumph is in translating the general principle into the specifically less accommodating world of adult rugby.

Last season he dipped his toe in the water by coaching Aberavon to the Second Division championship. This season he came home, thereby fulfilling a lifetime aspiration and bringing a bevy of his school old boys from Aberavon to Neath to join others already there. The majority of the Neath back division – including the Wales centre Leigh Davies – are aged just 20 or 21.

Beyond Neath, Jones is remembered as the obscure outside-half who led Oxford in the centenary University match of 1972 when Tim Seymour, the Dark Blues captain, was injured. Jones, a very mature student, was at Oxford on a postgraduate course when he played one game for the Greyhounds before being dropped and asked to coach the Blues.

Injuries then caused him to play in Oxford's penultimate pre-Varsity match against Gloucester and in Seymour's absence his second appearance was at Twickenham as both captain and 30-year-old freshman Blue. Oxford lost, Jones went back to Neath and has since coached Neath Grammar School, Dwr-y-Felin Comprehensive and Neath College, successive manifestations of the same illustrious rugby institution.

The latter has won the British colleges' competition 11 times and the Rosslyn Park Schools' Sevens three times under Jones's tutelage. Mind you, guru status in schools' rugby does not equate with the same at senior level and Jones would concede that it has taken him and his players – eight of the cup-final team are Neath College old boys – all of this season to come to terms with what could politely be called the cynicism of opposing defences.

"Teams try to stop us at schools' level as well but we've been playing this adventurous, explosive rugby much longer so have our methods to counteract it," he said. "We are getting there with Neath too. It's a great challenge for a coach to devise how we stop them stopping us but Neath have shown often enough that it can be done.

"We have to recognise that we won't do it all the time, so the team also have to be capable of doing something different. Fortunately we have the forwards to change the game and drive us forward, but I have to say that my way of playing rugby is the only way for me and if people think they can prevent you by infringing all the time we'll just have to do it that much better."

Occasionally but decreasingly – not least in the semi-final against Newport which Neath required Patrick Horgan's last-minute penalty to win – things do not work out to Jones's plan. This would matter less if it were not for the asset-strippers for whom The Gnoll seems to represent Eldorado in rugby's new entrepreneurial age.

Darryl Jones is looking at a brilliant prospect five years hence when his talented tiros have all matured but already the Llewellyn brothers are about to leave for London and who knows who else might soon find a fast buck more attractive than fast and open rugby?

and realised the possibility of acceptance and surgery.

"It was like coming home," she said. "When I realised that

Court of Justice found that the behaviour of the school directors breached the 1976 Euro-

that the Government would have to amend legislation.

birth certificates and passports."

missioning

but muted, warm, applause.

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Tendulkar arrives in good company

Derek Pringle, the *Independent*'s new Cricket Correspondent, greets the globetrotting Indians as they touch down and suggests England understimate them at their peril

Barely a cuckoo has been heard and already the Indian tourists have had their first net at Lord's. With just a week's rest under their belts since their last one-day tournament in Sharjah (the second since the World Cup), their arrival here on Tuesday has even outstripped the first ball of the County Championship, due to be bowled somet[illegible] today.

Clearly, it is not just the England side that is buffeted around the globe from one tournament to the next. As ever, though, it is stars like Sachin Tendulkar, India's 23-year-old batting supernova, who have to soak up most of the pressure on the pitch, as well as giving up much of their time off it.

Much is expected of Tendulkar, who is also vice-captain, but then it always has. Ever since he burst on to the Test scene as a precocious teenager in 1989, the Indian public have proclaimed him a treasure and nationalised him.

It is a weighty encumbrance that few others, save Brian Lara, can even begin to imagine and one that – unhappily for England's bowlers – India's cricket manager, Sandip Patil, reckons affects him far more at home than abroad, where he is less likely to have the rushes of blood that remain the weak point of his game.

"Batting at No 4, the people back home are expecting big things from me. It's not the first time so I'm pretty relaxed about it now. In a way I've got used to it. I now know the only thing that matters is to go to the middle and play my natural game and runs will come automatically."

It says much about the modesty and wisdom of the player, that he keeps his cricket and his commercial activities separate. "They are two sides of a coin and I don't want to mix those two sides," he said, dead-batting an obvious long-hop, before confirming that his deals through WorldTel – his agents, who bought the television rights to the last World Cup – will be worth approximately $7.5m (£5m) over the next five years.

With endorsements of Pepsi, Visa and Phillips, it is enough to be a one-man industry. However, any suggestions that India are a one-man batting side should be quickly scotched, despite the sketchy form of the skipper, Mohammed Azharuddin (only two half-centuries in the last six months). Any line-up that can boast the likes of Navjot Sidhu, Sanjay Manjrekar and Ajay Jadeja must not be taken lightly, and much is expected of the newcomer, Vikram Rathore, a young opening bat from the Punjab.

Traditionally, India's batsmen have all been vulnerable to the seaming ball. Since 1932, they have won only two Test series in England. One in 1971, when Raymond Illingworth was captain of England, and again in 1986, when Mike Gatting was at the helm.

However, as most Test pitches here are now fairly bare, and all but two of the current party have played either league or county cricket in England, it is less likely to be a factor in deciding the outcome of the series. This was a point the Indian selectors clearly took into consideration when they picked two leg-spinners, Anil Kumble and Narendra Hirwani, and two slow left-arm bowlers, Venkatapathy Raju and Sunil Joshi.

Kumble was the highest wicket-taker in county cricket last season with 105 dismissals and remains a threat with his bounce, irrespective of whether a pitch turns. In any case, Javagal Srinath, who opened the bowling for Gloucestershire last year, was only 18 wickets behind him, so even if Illingworth were suddenly to persuade the groundsmen to produce greentops, it is unlikely that England could take advantage, particularly if Dominic Cork's knee injury should flare up again.

Somewhat surprisingly, given that over the past few months they seem to have been playing just about anywhere that has a cricket pitch, this will be India's first overseas Test series for three years. The last was a disastrous visit to South Africa in 1993, which threatened to topple Azharuddin from the captaincy until England turned him into a hero by bellyflopping to a 3-0 whitewash in India.

If Michael Atherton is hoping India will return the favour, he may have to wait a while yet. For despite six of the party having yet to experience Test cricket, there is a very real confidence that the greenhorns will learn quickly, particularly Paras Mhambrey, a pace bowler from Bombay and one of the few bowlers who does not hail from Karnataka.

"Certainly it is tough, having players who have not played Tests," said Patil, India's impressive and upbeat manager, who among other things has been a film star and a pop singer. "Yet in a way it is good. Those who have not played Tests always look forward to it, so it is not a big worry."

Azharuddin, wrapped in at least five layers of clothing (it was well over 100F when the team left Delhi) was in agreement, and felt that the youngsters would push the senior players, which could only be a good thing.

As he toddled off to find another sweater, he for one will be hoping it turns out to be an Indian summer.

Sachin Tendulkar opens his 'coffin' at Lord's yesterday — Photograph: Graham Chadwick/Allsport

Bad light reduces game to farce

A Benson and Hedges Cup game that promised high drama ended in high farce yesterday evening, when Lancashire beat Derbyshire on a faster scoring rate at Chesterfield.

The rain-affected match was set for a thrilling finish after the first day when Lancashire, chasing 138 for victory, slumped to 70 for 6 before rain halted play. More heavy rain prevented the match resuming until 4.20pm, but it then descended into confusion as bad light forced the players from the field again.

At that stage Lancashire were 107 for 7 from 25 overs – the cut-off point when a game can be decided on faster scoring rate. Lancashire were ahead on that count when the light was offered immediately at the end of the 25th over and there were cries of "cheat" as the players headed for the pavilion.

But one of the umpires, Trevor Jesty, insisted: "The 25 overs did not come into it. We offered it because it was bad light, that's all. We had been watching the light for the previous two overs and it just got bad very quickly."

When the umpires decided conditions had improved, Lancashire's target had been reduced to 121 from 44 overs and Warren Hegg and Ian Austin quickly wrapped up the county's third group A victory.

Northamptonshire's hopes of improving on their third place in last year's Britannic Assurance Championship have been hit by an injury worry over their West Indies paceman Curtly Ambrose.

Northants travel to Durham in the opening round of games today without their overseas player, who is due to arrive back in England this weekend. But he has picked up a knee injury in the current Test against New Zealand and the county are unsure when he will be available.

■ Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie has been named as the new president of MCC, taking over from Sir Oliver Popplewell. A forceful middle-order left-hander for Hampshire for 14 years, the new president captained the county from 1958 to 1965.

■ Curtly Ambrose disregarded a persistent knee injury to claim five innings wickets in a Test for the 14th time on the fourth day of the second Test against New Zealand in Antigua yesterday. However, the match is certain to be a draw as New Zealand, resuming at 346 for 7, raised three runs to avoid the follow-on in the day's first over and were not dismissed until an hour after lunch for 437. West Indies were 548 for 7 declared.

Emburey's cool reason is Northamptonshire asset

Michael Austin talks to the coach who put county cricket before England's call

Emburey: happy to play on

Laid-back he may look, with an economical bowling action and an uncomplicated batting style, but John Emburey, Northamptonshire's new coach, is a serious individual, not vulnerable to the mood swings of some contemporaries in his England heyday.

Not all renowned players make top-class coaches, but Emburey's adopted county have recognised his qualities. A four-year contract, together with the extension of his playing career for another season, sums up their sentiments. They were emphasised by Emburey being on a list one "contested" registration, because he rejected a two-year contract from Middlesex, his previous county.

Northamptonshire feel justified in using one of only two list one places allowed in any five-year period, despite Emburey saying that his own playing plans are "fairly flexible". The list one category is usually reserved for some young buck with seasons ahead of him.

For the present, Emburey is happy to play on, which is one of the reasons why he made himself unavailable when being sounded out as a candidate for the role of England coach, now bestowed on Lancashire's David Lloyd. Emburey coached England's successful A team in Pakistan last winter but said: "I do realise that with continuing to play this year that I do need more time in coaching and management to make sure I get it right.

"I want to get involved with the England set-up in the future. I have lots of ideas which I hope would be of benefit to the team," said the 43-year-old Emburey, who is starting his 24th season as a county player. Since first considering a cricket career at the age of 13, Emburey, a big spinner of the ball in suitable conditions, has gone on to take almost 1,600 wickets.

After 64 Test matches, 61 limited-overs internationals and 500 first-class appearances, the years have taken no toll on his enthusiasm either. During Northamptonshire's pre-season tour of South Africa, he marked his debut in a three-day game against Transvaal with 2 for 21 in 16 overs, despite an unhelpful pitch.

These are potentially productive times for the county, as Emburey asserted: "I am fortunate to have come to a club that was successful last season, finishing third in the County Championship and being NatWest Trophy finalists. Hopefully, we can go on and win a competition this summer."

His immediate thoughts occupy the opening County Championship match against Durham, starting today at Chester-le-Street, now that Northamptonshire have made a winning start in the Benson and Hedges Cup.

They beat Worcestershire and Scotland in the opening games, promoting David Capel from the lower order to knock the cover off the ball and exploit early-innings gaps in the outfield created by new regulations requiring nine fielders inside the circle for the first 15 overs.

Capel's elevation yielded two innings of 40-plus, though Emburey asserted that the ploy is not written in stone.

"There could be times when we want the Sri Lankan approach that they adopted in the World Cup or others when we need the more down-to-earth Australian plan, with a solid start and a build-up of momentum," he conceded. "In general terms I do not want to play at the expense of someone younger but I expect to be involved early season at least when the pitches are a bit green and not suited to spin bowling."

As for his switch from Lord's, Emburey expects to enjoy the more intimate surroundings of Northampton, and said: "Once you have been there a while, you get a bit blasé about it and, at the end of the day, you are happy to get away from there."

Ironically, Emburey scored his maiden first-class hundred against Northamptonshire at Lord's in 1982, but added: "As for Northampton itself, oddly over all the years, I have played only three or four Championship games at the ground. I cannot remember taking lots of wickets here either. That's a bit worrying," he mused, breaking into a rare chuckle, far removed from his steely determination to get his team excelling on a greensward illuminated with golden summer moments.

CRICKET SCOREBOARD

Benson and Hedges Cup

Derbyshire v Lancashire

CHESTERFIELD: Lancashire won due to higher run rate

DERBYSHIRE 137 (M Walkenson 5-44).

LANCASHIRE – First Innings (Overnight: 70 for 6)

N H Fairbrother b Griffith	25
†W K Hegg not out	28
I D Austin not out	8
Extras (lb4, w6, nb6)	16
Total [for 7, 28.3 overs]	124

Fall: 7-105.
Did not bat: P J Martin, G Chapple.
Score at 15 overs: 73 for 6.
Bowling: Malcolm 10-1-38-1; Cork 10-1-49-5; DeFreitas 3.3-0-21-0; Griffith 3-0-12-1.
Umpires: T E Jesty and K E Palmer.

Glamorgan v Somerset

CARDIFF: Somerset won due to higher run rate

SOMERSET 239 for 8 (R J Turner 70, A N Hayhurst 67 no).

GLAMORGAN – First Innings (Overnight: 108 for 2)

A Dale c Trump b Rose	48
*M P Maynard b Hayhurst	37
P A Cottey not out	24
R D B Croft c Trump b Lee	2
S D Thomas c Ecclestone b Lee	0
G P Butcher not out	3
Extras (lb6, w8)	14
Total [for 6, 36 overs]	161

Fall: 1-16, 2-50, 3-121, 4-140, 5-143, 6-146.
Did not bat: †C P Metson, S L Watkin, S R Barwick.
Score at 15 overs: 55 for 2.
Bowling: Caddick 10-3-42-2; Rose 8-1-33-1; Lee 7-0-38-2; Ecclestone 8-0-31-0; Hayhurst 3-0-13-1.
Umpires: B Dudleston and J W Holder.

No play yesterday

CHESTER-LE-STREET: Durham 143 for 4 (M A Roseberry 55 no) v Warwickshire. No result. Match abandoned.

JESMOND: Minor Counties 206 for 9; Leicestershire 173 for 5. Match abandoned. Leicestershire won due to higher run rate.

Group A

	P	W	L	T	Pts
Warwicks	2	2	0	0	4
Lancashire	2	2	0	0	4
Derbyshire	2	1	1	0	2
Leics	2	1	1	0	2
Durham	2	0	2	0	0
Minor Counties	2	0	2	0	0

Group C

	P	W	L	T	Pts
Kent	3	3	0	0	6
Essex	3	2	1	0	4
Somerset	3	2	1	0	4
Glamorgan	3	2	1	0	4
Middlesex	3	0	3	0	0
British Univ.	3	0	3	0	0

Starting Today
(11.00 unless stated)
BRITANNIC ASSURANCE
COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP
(first day of four):
Derby: Derbyshire v Leicestershire.
Chester-le-Street: Durham v Northamptonshire.
Cardiff: Glamorgan v Yorkshire.
Canterbury: Kent v Lancashire.
Lord's: Middlesex v Gloucestershire.
Trent Bridge: Nottinghamshire v Sussex
Taunton: Somerset v Surrey.
Worcester: Worcestershire v Essex.
Other Match (first day of three): The Parks: Oxford University v Hampshire (11.30).

TODAY'S NUMBER

25

The years the record for the fastest speedway ride has stood until it was broken by Mark Loram. The Exeter rider's winning time of 64.3sec yesterday at the County Ground worked out at 55.11mph on a near quarter-mile fenced circuit.

SPORTING DIGEST

American football

Houston Oilers have won approval to move to Nashville for the 1998 season after 23 of the 30 National Football League team owners voted to allow the switch. They are the fourth NFL team to move cities in the last two years.

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Boston 13 Detroit 4; Cleveland 5 Chicago White Sox 3; New York Yankees 13 Baltimore 10; Toronto 9 Milwaukee 8; Minnesota 16 Kansas City 7; Seattle 8 Texas 0; California 7 Oakland 3.

NATIONAL LEAGUE: Florida 7 Philadelphia 2; Pittsburgh 10 Cincinnati 7; Chicago Cubs 7 St Louis 6; Atlanta 7 Houston 5; Los Angeles 7 Colorado 4; San Francisco 9 San Diego 4.

Basketball

NBA PLAY-OFFS First round: Eastern Conference: Orlando 101, Detroit 95 (Orlando win best-of-five series 3-0). Western Conference: Houston 104 Los Angeles 98 (Houston lead best-of-five series 2-1); Seattle 96 Sacramento 89 (Seattle lead best-of-five series 2-1).

Cycling

TOUR OF FRIULI (one stage, 207km): 1 A Tsarenouk (Kaz) 5hr 4min 58sec; 2 A Chelke (Rus) +1.8sec; 3 M Zan (It) +26sec; 4 S Borghesi (It); 5 G Fiessin (It) both same time; 6 A Noe (It) +32sec; 7 F Guidi (It) +34sec; 8 M Betoni (It); 9 D Zanetta (It); 10 C Chiappucci (It) all same time.

TOUR OF ALENTEJO (176km, Cuba to Montemor-o-Novo) Fifth stage: 1 S Swiaiuskas (Lit) Recer/Bouvista 4hr 7min 8sec; 2 P Silva (Por) Aluminios/Kelman; 3 D Garcia (Sp) (Euskadi); 4 L Machado (Por) Tralemarisco; 5 P Indurain (Sp) Banesto; 6 P Ferreira (Por) Maia/Jumbo/Cin; 7 M Liberato (Por) Tralemarisco; 8 S Stanchev (Bul) Ba/Teka; 9 Manuel Abreu (Por) Maia/Jumbo; 10 A Silva (Por) W52/Paredes/Fibrominde all same time. Leading standings: 1 M Indurain (Sp) Banesto 12hr 24min 17sec; 2 P Indurain +1.8sec; 3 J Sampaio (Por) Maia/Jumbo/Cin +30; 4 M Abreu +35; 5 J Silva (Por) Maia/Jumbo/Cin +42; 6 D Garcia +43; 7 C Soleuk (Sp) Euskadi +46; 8 A Amaral (Por) Tralemarisco +51; 9 P Ferreira +55; 10 J Andrade (Por) Maia/Jumbo/Cin +1.02.

Football

PORTUGUESE SUPER CUP: Sporting Lisbon 3 Porto 0.

INTERNATIONAL UNDER-21 FRIENDLY: Poland 1 (Dupieki 88) Belarus 1 (Lisovski 80).

PREMIER AND FIRST DIVISION SUSPENSIONS: Sendings-Off: S Fitzgerald (Wimbledon) 5 matches from 4 May; A Rae (Millwall) 4 matches from 4 May; C Makin (Oldham) 3 matches from 4 May; R Naylor (Ipswich) 4 matches from 4 May.

TUESDAY'S LATE RESULTS: Endsleigh Insurance League First Division: Barnsley 1 WBA 1; Charlton 0 Tranmere 0; Luton 3 Port Vale 2; Oldham 2 Stoke 0; Reading 3 Wolves 0. Second Division: Bradford 1 Swindon 1; Crewe 2 Peterborough 1; Walsall 3 Burnley 1; York 0 Chesterfield 1. Third Division: Hereford 4 Hartlepool 1. GM Vauxhall Conference: Bath 1 Macclesfield 1; Bromsgrove 1 Morecambe 0; Kettering 0 Telford 3; Woking 0 Northwich 0. Isis League Premier Division: Boreham Wood 0 Yeovil 2; Enfield 3 Aylesbury 3. First Division: Aldershot 0 Billericay 1; Basingstoke 0 Maidow 1; Berkhamsted 1 Barton 2; Staines 2 Bognor Regis 2; Tooting and Mitcham 1 Ruislip Manor 1; Wembley 2 Wyncote 2; Wokingham 2 Oxford City 4. Second Division: Bracknell 1 Chalfont St Peter 0; Canvey Island 2 Collier Row 1; Egham 1 Banstead 0; Tilbury 4 Ware 0. Third Division: East Thurrock 2 Kingsbury 2; Epsom and Ewell 0 Wealdstone 2; Hanwell 0 Honeham 6; Hertford 2 Hornchurch 4; Northwood 1 Windsor and Eton 1. Unibond League Premier Division: Buxton 0 Guiseley 0; Chorley 1 Hyde 0; Emley 2 Marine 0; Gainsborough 2 Colwyn Bay 2; Spennymoor 4 Bamber Bridge 2. First Division: Radcliffe Borough 2 Curzon Ashton 1. Beaver Homes League Premier Division: Cambridge City 2 Gosley Rovers 3; Cawley 1 Halesowen 3; Gloucester 1 Dorchester 0; Sudbury Town 0 Worcester 0. Dr Martens Cup Final second leg: Nuneaton Borough 2 Bedlock 1 (agg 5-2). Midland Division: Evesham Utd 1 Buckingham Town 4; King's Lynn 4 Bridgnorth 0; Redditch 4 Oadby 1. Southern Division: Ashford 0 Tonbridge 0; Cinderford 3 Bashley 0; Fleet 2 Trowbridge 1; Newport IoW 1 Margate 0; Poole 2 Erith and Belvedere 4. League of Wales: Barry 2 Llansamlet 1; Caersws 2 Inter Cardiff 2; Ebbw Vale 1 Newtown 3; Holywell 0 Rhyl 1. Federation Northern League First Division: Dunston Federation 1 Bedlington Terriers 1. Hereward United Counties League Premier Division: Desborough 2 Wootton 5; Eynesbury 0 Coggeshall 2. Jewson Eastern League Premier Division: Diss 0 Wroxham 3; Harlow 0 Sudbury Town Res 1; Halstead 2 Woodbridge 1; Tiptree 3 Felixstowe 1. Martin West Counties League First Division: Darwen 3 Buscough 1; Flixton 1 St Helens 0; Holker Old Boys 1 Clitheroe 1. Intertoto expunged Midland Alliance: Cheslyn 4 Willenhall 2; Halesowen Harriers 5 Shepshed Dynamo 1; Oldbury 5 Rocester 1; Rushall Olympic 0 Boldmere St Michaels 4. Unibet Sussex County League First Division: Burgess Hill 1 Shoreham 3; Hailsham 2 Langney 0; Oakwood 0 Steyning 5; Wick 5 Mile Oak 3. Whitbread Kent League First Division: Bridgham 2 Crockenhill 3; Furness 1 Corinthian 0; Sheppey v Chatham; Tunbridge Wells 3 Thamesmead 2; Whitstable 0 Greenwich Borough 4. FA Youth Cup Final first leg: West Ham 0 Liverpool 2. Pontins League First Division: Notts County 2 Wolverhampton 1; Sheffield Utd 1 Everton 4. Second Division: Grimsby 1 Coventry 2. Avon Insurance Combination League Cup Final: Plymouth 0 Birmingham 1. German League: Hansa Rostock 1 Freiburg 0; Uerdingen 0 Bayer Leverkusen 3; Schalke 2 VfB Stuttgart 0; Karlsruhe 5 Borussia Dortmund 0; Fortuna Dusseldorf 2 St Pauli 0; Hamburg 2 Borussia Mönchengladbach 1; Cologne 3 Eintracht Frankfurt 0. Leading positions: 1 Borussia Dortmund (P30, Pts59); 2 Bayern Munich (30-58); 3 Borussia Mönchengladbach (31-50). Swedish League: Degerfors 2 Gothenburg 7; Malmo 2 Orebro 0; Umea 0 Helsingborg 2; Trelleborg 0 AIK 1; Oster 0 Oddevold 1; Orgryte 0 Halmstad 0; Gunsjaden 1 Norrkoping 1. International Friendly (Tel Aviv): Israel 4 South Korea 5.

Ice hockey

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (Vienna) Quarter-final: Russia 5 Italy 2. Relegation round (first game of two): France 6 Austria 3.

Pools dividends

LITTLEWOODS: 24pts £1,250,743.00; 23 £2,054.10; 22 £149.65; 21 £23.85; 20 £5.05. Four draws: £18.75. 10 homes: £968.45. Five aways: pool void. Stakes for entries in pools declared void will be used as payment in full or in part of clients' next entries.

VERNONS: Treble chance: 24pts £247,149.95; 23pts £1,840.60; 22pts £102.40; 21pts £16.30. 10 homes: £22.10. Five aways: void stakes may be used in payment of client's next entries.

ZETETIC: Treble chance: 24pts £25,439.55; 23 £142.00; 22 £15.10; 21 £2.00. Top 10 points pool: 20pts £870.15; 19 £580.10. Four draws £41.00. Eight homes £311.20. Easy 5s: £10.60. Four aways void stakes may be used in payment of clients' next entries. Lucky numbers: 27 11 23 33 37 14.

BRITTENS: Treble chance: 23pts £1,039.40; 22 £24.05; 21 £3.85. Four draws £13.70. Eight homes £21.00. Five aways £1.00.

Rugby Union

Alan Sharp, Bristol's ex-Scotland prop, has been suspended after receiving two yellow cards and will miss his team's final First Division match of the season at West Hartlepool on Sunday.

Neath have caused a surprise in their team to play Pontypridd in Saturday's Swalec Cup final by preferring Robin Jones at blind-side flanker to the 6ft 8in Andrew Kembery, a try-scorer against Llanelli last Friday.

NEATH (v Pontypridd, Swalec Cup final, Cardiff, Saturday): Richard Jones C Higgs, L Davies, J Funnell, G Evans P Williams, P Horgan, D Morris, B Williams, J Davies, Glyn Llewellyn, Gareth Llewellyn (capt), Robin Jones, S Williams, I Boobyer. Replacements: H Woodland, C Bridges, L Gerrard, K Allen, A Kembery, C Scott.

The Leicester front row of Graham Rowntree, Richard Cockerill and Darren Garforth have been chosen for the Barbarians to play against Ireland in the Peace International in Dublin on 18 May. The rest of the side will be finalised when the southern hemisphere players become available towards the end of the Super-12 Tournament.

The Auckland Blues beat New South Wales in a high-scoring game at Eden Park yesterday to regain the Super-12 lead they lost to Queensland at the weekend. Their 56-44 win gave Sean Fitzpatrick, captain of the All Blacks, a fillip in his 300th first-class game, seeing the rare feat of 100 points in a New Zealand first-class match.

SUPER-12: Wellington Auckland Blues 56 New South Wales 44. Durban: Natal 49 Transvaal 13. Leading standings: 1 Auckland (P9, Pts37); 2 Queensland (9-33); 3 Natal (9-31).

Table tennis

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS (Bratislava, Slovakia) Men's semi-final: France 4 Poland 1. (French first) D Eloi bt L Blaszczyk 21-13 21-18, J-P Gatien bt T Krzeszewski 21-12 21-13, P Chila bt P Skierski 21-14 21-15, Gatien and Eloi lost to A Grubba and Blaszczyk 25-23 18-21 21-14, Gatien bt Blaszczyk 19-21 21-14 21-15; Sweden 4 Belgium 1. (Sweden first) P Karlsson lost to J-M Saive 12-21 21-18 1-21, J-O Waldner bt P Saive 12-21 21-10 21-18, J Persson bt A Popinka 22-24 21-18 21-17, Waldner and Persson bt Saive and Saive 21-18 21-15, Waldner bt J-M Saive 21-8 21-17. Women's final: Germany 4 Hungary 2. (German first) N Struse lost to K Toth 18-21 21-19 8-21, O Nemes bt C Bartoli 21-19 17-21 21-14, J Schopp bt V Ella 21-15 21-18, Struse and E Schall lost to Bartoli and Toth 14-21 18-21, Struse bt Bartoli 21-14 21-18, Schopp bt Toth 13-21 23-21 21-11. Women's play-off placings: 3-4: Romania 4 England 0. 5-8: Russia 4 Italy 2. 7-8: Ukraine 4 Czech Republic 1. 9-10: France 4 Croatia 3. 11-12: Sweden 4 Belgium 1.

Tennis

HAMBURG WOMEN'S OPEN First round: J Halard-Decugis (Fr) bt J Kandarr (Ger) 6-3 6-2; M Hingis (Swi) bt M Paz (Arg) 6-1 6-1; A Glass (Ger) bt M Strandlund (Swe) 6-3 6-4; A Montolio (Sp) bt M Oremans (Neth) 6-0 6-2; J Wiesner (Aut) bt R Bobkova (Cz Rep) 6-1 6-1; K Nowak (Pol) bt S Meier (Ger) 6-4 7-5; K Boogert (Neth) bt E Wagner (Ger) 6-1 6-1; V Ruano-Pascal (Sp) bt A Serra-Zanetti (It) 6-1 6-4. Second round: A Sanchez-Vicario (Sp) bt P Schnyder (Swit) 6-2 6-0; R Dragomir (Rom) bt A Carlsson (Swe) 6-1 3-6 6-1.

ATP TOURNAMENT (Munich) Second round: G Ivanisevic (Cro) bt R Carretero (Sp) 6-7 6-3 6-4; C Moya (Sp) bt T Carbonell (Sp) 6-7 6-2 6-2; T Muster (Aut) bt H Dreekmann (Ger) 4-6 6-2 7-5; M Philippoussis (Aus) w/o P Korda (Cz Rep) scr (Korda withdrew with illness).

LTA SPRING SATELLITE (Hatfield) Men's first round: W Tieu (Aus) bt M Lee (GB) 6-2 6-4; T Schessing (Aut) bt A Palmer (GB) 6-2 6-1; P Paris (Cz Rep) bt F Dondo (Uru) 7-5 6-7 6-4; N Weal (GB) bt S Pender (GB) 6-4 1-6 6-2; P Kilderry (Aus) bt J Barnett (GB) 6-1 6-2; D Sapsford (GB) bt N Beglin (GB) 6-0 3-1 ret; A Du Pasa (Fr) bt R Barbier (Fr) 6-3 6-2; R Nickisch (Ger) bt R Matheson (GB) 7-6 7-5; O Burneiza (Sp) bt M Wyeth (GB) 6-1 6-0; A Richardson (GB) bt C Geyer (Ger) 6-4 6-4; M Goodacr (Aus) bt M Turkovac (Slovak) 6-3 7-6 6-4; P Hand (GB) bt D Sanders (GB) 6-4 3-0 ret; G Stassinomp (SA) bt S Bandermann (Ger) 7-5 4-6 7-5; J Delgado (GB) bt J Davidson (GB) 6-1 4-6 6-3; P Moschoutis (Gr) bt D Deaper (GB) 6-3 6-4; T Sparke (GB) bt G Saffery (GB) 7-5 7-5. Women's second round: J Steck (SA) bt A Tordoff (GB) 6-3 7-5; E Le Bescond (Fr) bt M Chernovka (Indon) 6-3 6-2; L Woodroffe (GB) bt J Ward (GB) 6-3 ret; A Kurimay (Hun) bt M Markina (Rus) 6-4 7-5; Egorova (Rus) bt S Sedall (GB) 7-6 7-5; K Batekova (Cz Rep) bt G Niland (Rep of Ire) 6-3 6-3; J Wood (GB) bt B Auer (Aut) 4-6 6-2 6-4; J Pullin (GB) bt L Latimer (GB) 6-3 6-1.

CZECH MEN'S OPEN (Prague) First round: B Ulihrach ((Cz Rep) bt P Luxa (Cz Rep) 6-0 6-2; C Ruud (Nor) bt M Damm (Cz Rep) 6-2 6-3. Second round: Y Kafelnikov (Rus) bt N Marquez (Per) 6-4 6-2; J Sanchez (Sp) bt G Kuerten (Bra) 7-6 3-6 7-6; A Moron (Sp) bt M-A Gomez (Sp) 6-2 6-2; E Sanchez (Sp) bt F Mantilla (Sp) 7-6 6-3.

AT&T CHALLENGE MEN'S TOURNAMENT (Atlanta) First round: M Chang (US) bt M Sell (US) 6-3 6-4; R Reneberg (US) bt J Connors (US) 6-2 3-6 6-1; J Frana (Arg) bt M Filippini (Uru) 7-6 3-6 6-4; R Fromberg (Aus) bt M Wilander (Swe) 6-3 6-4; B Shelton (US) bt C Woodruff 6-3 2-6 6-3; V Spadea (US) bt G Pozzi (It) 6-2 6-4; S Stolle (Aus) bt G Doyle (Aus) 7-5 6-2; S Draper (Aus) bt P Rafter (Aus) 7-6 6-4.

Young ready to be part of union again

Rugby League

David Young is to return to rugby union, after Cardiff yesterday agreed a fee with Salford to take him back to South Wales at the end of this Super League season, writes Dave Hadfield.

Young, who left the club to join Leeds six years ago, has captained the Welsh rugby league side and says that he has ambitions to win back his place in the Welsh union pack.

Martin Offiah hopes to return after a back injury for Wigan's match against Paris St-Germain on Sunday. That reopens the possibility of his playing in the first of the cross-code meetings with Bath, under league rules at Maine Road next Wednesday. Another Wigan player, Nigel Wright, is due to make his comeback after a long absence with a serious ankle injury in the Alliance team on Monday.

Andy Northey, who played in St Helens' Challenge Cup winning side on Saturday, will be out for about six weeks after tearing groin muscles in the first half of the final at Wembley.

DEREK PRINGLE, the *Independent's* new Cricket Correspondent, looks ahead to the challenge the Indians will provide this summer

Harding leads battle to keep Hoddle

Football

GLENN MOORE

Chelsea were last night fighting to persuade Glenn Hoddle that a future with the Blues was brighter than one with England.

Were they to succeed the Football Association are believed already to have sounded out alternative successors to Terry Venables, the retiring England coach. They are thought to be Frank Clark and Howard Wilkinson, the managers of Nottingham Forest and Leeds United respectively.

Chelsea's effort was led by Matthew Harding, the club's vice-chairman, who spent almost four hours with Hoddle in a secret home counties location. In the meeting the millionaire outlined his dream of a partnership between Harding and Hoddle which would make Chelsea a power in the football world.

Meanwhile, Ken Bates, the club chairman, was locked in discussions with Hoddle's agent. He also weighed in with a counter-attack accusing the FA of breaking their own rules by approaching Hoddle before asking permission from himself.

The approach, the probability of which was carried in later editions of yesterday's *Independent*, was first confirmed by Harding yesterday morning. It had been made, he said, on Tuesday.

Before going into yesterday's meeting Harding said: "I've got to convince Glenn that we can give him three to four years of more fulfilling football management than England can."

Afterwards he said: "I am doing everything I can to keep him at Chelsea. That we are still talking is a good sign. A lot of people thought it would just be 10 minutes over a cold cup of coffee and Glenn saying 'that's it, I'm off. Say 'thank you' to everyone at Chelsea'."

Hoddle himself said: "I've got a few hours, a few days, to chew it over. There are obviously other issues as well."

Hoddle would not go into those but one of them is bound to be the continuing boardroom wrangling at Chelsea between Bates and Harding. Chelsea player Terry Phelan, who Hoddle signed earlier this season, admitted: "I don't think he knows whether he's coming or going, he's tried his best."

The dispute, which at one stage was bitterly conducted through the tabloid media, has calmed down but Harding is yet to find a way to persuade Bates to relinquish control to him.

It is possible that he is using England's interest to lever either change at Chelsea, or better terms for himself. He is certainly thought to have been made an offer far in excess of the likely £250,000 a year for managing England. Then again, he may have delayed signing a new contract (his present one expires this summer) in the hope of his country calling him.

Bates was quick to dispel suggestions that Ruud Gullit might assist Hoddle in the England job. "There is no way he is leaving. He is under exclusive contract with this club until June 1997 and under no circumstances will we release him."

Gullit himself said he was "surprised" at the speculation and added: "I am enjoying myself at the club at the moment and all I want to do is play football. We will have to wait to see what Glenn does. I am happy they have given him the opportunity. If he takes the job, it would mean things changing at Chelsea, but you cannot think only of yourself."

Gullit would be a candidate to succeed Hoddle at Chelsea, as would George Graham, a former Chelsea player. Graham Rix and Peter Shreeves, both of whom work with Hoddle at present, may be more likely to move with him than replace him.

The possible impact of Hoddle going was made clear last night when a bid for John Spencer, Chelsea's Scottish international striker, was received.

Hoddle himself was believed to have had a lengthy discussion with Jimmy Armfield, the FA's special advisor, over the England job. The full implications of the job may only have become apparent when he woke up to find reporters camping on his Ascot doorstep yesterday morning.

Hoddle was the only one of the new wave of young managers not to rule himself out when Venables announced in January that he would not be seeking a new contract after *Euro96*.

While the FA may have had their hand forced by the growing prospect of Hoddle following the original favourite, Middlesbrough's Bryan Robson, and agreeing a new contract with his club they need to have the new coach installed before *Euro96*. That would give him the chance to study both England and Italy – the national side's main World Cup opponents.

That campaign opens on 1 September in Moldova. It is an unromantic location to begin a new era but even purists have to start somewhere.

The England succession, Ken Jones, page 26

Kluivert 'free to play'

The prosecutor seeking a nine-month jail term for Patrick Kluivert has said he would settle for community service at the Ajax striker's trial for vehicular homicide.

Kluivert, 19, was accused of going twice the speed limit just before the BMW he was driving ploughed into another car, killing its driver and injuring the victim's wife. Kluivert did not enter a plea and has admitted being the driver of the car but denied driving as fast as the prosecutor claimed.

Three months of the sentence sought by Anton Schotman would be suspended and Kluivert would be banned from driving for two years if found guilty.

Schotman added that if Kluivert wished, he could perform 240 hours of community service instead of going to jail.

A community service order would leave Kluivert free to play in the European Cup final on 22 May for the defending champions against Juventus and for the Netherlands in *Euro 96* which starts in June in England.

The three-judge panel will rule on the case on 14 May.

Toronto catcher Charlie O'Brien tags out Matt Mieske during the Blue Jays' 9-8 victory over the Milwaukee Brewers Photograph: Reuter

MacLeod calls for Gough's return

Ally MacLeod yesterday urged the Scotland manager, Craig Brown, to forget his past differences with Richard Gough and recall the Rangers defender to his squad for *Euro 96*.

As Brown prepares to announce his 22-man squad today for a two-match trip to the United States, the former Scotland manager called for Gough's three-year international exile to end.

MacLeod, who took Scotland to the 1978 World Cup finals in Argentina, sees Gough, winner of 61 caps, as the ideal partner for Blackburn's Colin Hendry after helping Rangers to an eighth successive League title.

"At centre-half Colin Hendry would be ideal, but I would like to see him partnered by Gough, although I know that is unlikely," MacLeod said.

Brown seems certain to overlook the Rangers' captain, despite doubts about the fitness of team-mate Alan McLaren, who requires knee surgery at the end of the season, and Tottenham's Colin Calderwood. The Scotland manager is likely to name Derek Whyte, of Middlesbrough, as a stand-by defender for the tour games against the United States and Colombia.

MacLeod also urged Brown to opt for Leeds' Gary McAllister as captain alongside Celtic's John Collins in midfield, Hibernian veteran Jim Leighton as the No 1 goalkeeper and Aberdeen's Scott Booth in attack. "I would go with Jim Leighton in goal because I think he is a good positional goalkeeper and perhaps just edges the decision over Andy Goram," MacLeod said.

Michael Duberry, the Chelsea defender groomed for international stardom by England manager-in-waiting Glenn Hoddle, steps up for the England Under-21s in in France later this month.

The 20-year-old from Enfield, outstanding at centre-half in Hoddle's sophisticated defence in his first full season, is the only uncapped player as England seek their fifth win in 10 attempts at the annual summer tournament in Toulon.

But in the start of a new two-year cycle players born after 1 January 1975 – most of Dave Seaman's strong squad are relatively new at this level, having been introduced in last month's 1-0 defeat by Croatia at Sunderland, a game Duberry missed through domestic suspension.

The only experienced players include Manchester United first-team regulars, Nicky Butt and David Beckham, Newcastle's Chris Holland, the Queen's Park Rangers striker Kevin Gallen and Crystal Place's Bruce Dyer.

England, who also face Angola, Portugal and Brazil, won the competition in 1990, 1991, 1993 and 1994. Proof of the tournament's value as a testbed for future senior players is provided by a glance at the team-sheet two years ago which included Robbie Fowler, Jamie Redknapp, Sol Campbell and Trevor Sinclair who are all senior squad players now.

ENGLAND UNDER-21 SQUAD (for tournament in Toulon this month): Day (Tottenham), Davis (Luton), Marshall (Norwich), Duberry (Chelsea), Rufus (Charlton), Scimeca (Aston Villa), Carbon (Derby County), Thatcher (Millwall), Briscoe (Sheffield Wednesday), Butt (Manchester United), Beckham (Manchester United), Holland (Newcastle), Bowyer (Charlton), Cooke (Manchester United), Eadie (Norwich), Gallen (Queen's Park Rangers), Dyer (Crystal Palace), Moore (Tranmere). Stand-by: Wright (Ipswich), O'Connor (Everton), Plummer (Queen's Park Rangers), Stuart (Chelsea), Ford (Leeds), Brown (Manchester City), Thornley (Manchester United), Stamp (Middlesbrough), Hendrie (Aston Villa), Heskey (Leicester), Bridges (Sunderland).

TOULON FIXTURES: 24 May: v Belgium (Toulon); 28 May v Angola (Cuers); 30 May v Portugal (Arles); 1 June v Brazil (Toulon, 20.45); 3 June: Final (Toulon).

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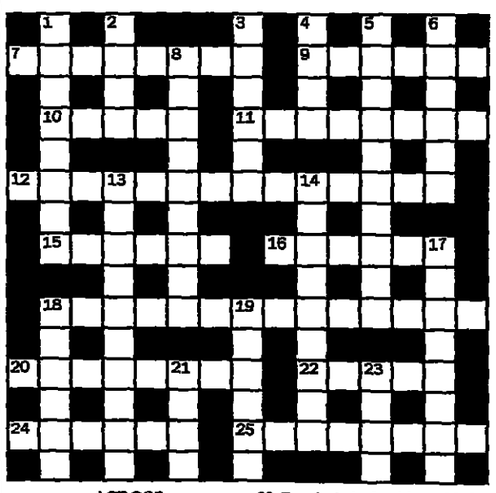
THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 2976. Thursday 2 May By Spurius



ACROSS

7 Media adviser to senior officer takes care of formalities (8)
9 Carriage for cricket team (6)
10 Material for study I'm finishing (5)
11 See rapid changes in velocity of craft (8)
12 Well-rounded exercises regularly used by highwayman? (9, 5)
15 All but allege monarch's scoffed cake (6)
16 Name accountant's acquired for turning sour? (6)
18 Dam uppity, for a religious person? (6, 8)
20 A tear secreted by a friend of mum's? (8)
22 Conclude by backing whistle-blower (5)
24 Tool for those working at a trade (6)
25 Endorse licence (8)

DOWN

1 Caution needed, as before, putting hopeless dunce in detention (8)
2 Star has time to absorb shock (4)
3 Base for a Hindu deity long kept under wraps (6)
4 Despotic ruler in Turkey, it appears (4)
5 He's perhaps already bought the place, prior to rep's spiel (10)
6 Cancel act, one held in disgust (6)
8 Bell-tower by river – Old Man River? (9)
13 Lacking education, so failing to obtain post? (10)
14 Subterfuge could be noticed, if record's kept (9)
17 Young singer roughed up, by the sound of it (8)
18 Diseased elm, say, covered in spots? (6)
19 Some sensationalism disrupting quiet place, for instance? (6)
21 Role army's given, to provide cover for king (4)
23 Cheese knife takes rind off (4)

Wednesday's Solution

THE FRANKLIN SCRAMBLE Make the longest word you can from PRAEDOOR Yesterday's Scramble: ADEQUATE

O'Sullivan's epic triumph

Snooker

GUY HODGSON reports from The Crucible

Having scraped past potential expulsion by disqualification, Ronnie O'Sullivan endured a trial on the table yesterday and, like the disciplinary inquiry before it, he just survived. He is now just a match away from his first Embassy World Championship final.

A desperately exciting, anxiety-ridden thing it was, too. Trailing 10-6 then 12-10 to John Higgins, the world No 3 kept alive his hopes of becoming the youngest champion by winning 13-12. Having got on a lot of nerves at The Crucible, it seems he is living on his own.

No matter how you feel about the 20-year-old from Chigwell – and there are plenty who are cheesed off with him – there is no doubting he is a fantastic snooker player. Most people would have succumbed to the pressure of having his life put under scrutiny after he assaulted a press officer this week, and he could easily have scurried off to hide when Higgins, the second favourite, took a commanding lead. Instead he produced breathtaking stuff.

The last two frames were epics in themselves. Twice O'Sullivan gave Higgins a clear run to the line when he rattled reds in the jaws of a corner pocket from the rest, but on each occasion the Scot blew it. The first time he had the colours on the spot, only to get out of position on the pink. The second, at 35-21 down in the deciding frame, he missed a red and O'Sullivan swooped for the kill with a break of 33.

It was a thrilling triumph, the sort to put away for mental reinspection in years to come, but O'Sullivan looked even more miserable than Higgins. "It's just a match," he mumbled. "I'm more pleased for the people around me who stuck by me this week. I can't thank them enough. It's difficult to explain how I feel, it's been a hard couple of days."

Asked if he had apologised in person to Michael Ganley, the official he assaulted on Sunday, O'Sullivan, who received a suspended two-year ban and a £20,000 fine for the offence, replied: "I'm going to do it the next time I see him. I have been under a lot of mental pressure. It's been tough."

While O'Sullivan has had his path to the semi-finals paved with headlines, Nigel Bond reached the last four in his usual manner: quiet, almost apologetic. He lets his snooker do his talking and eloquent it is, too, efficiently dispatching Dave Harold 13-7, rattling off the final three frames he needed in just over an hour.

EMBASSY WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (Sheffield) Quarter-finals: N Bond (Eng) bt D Harold (Eng) 13-7; R O'Sullivan (Eng) bt J Higgins (Sco) 13-12.

Bishop brokers peace

Rugby Union

STEVE BALE

Resolution of the bitter stand-off between the Rugby Football Union and its leading clubs over the administration and financing of professional rugby moved significantly nearer last night after a meeting of minds between the clubs and the RFU president, Bill Bishop, in the absence of the clubs' *bête noire*, Cliff Brittle.

Bishop was present in his role as independent chairman appointed by the RFU executive but Brittle, chairman of that executive, and the other two members of his negotiating team, had boycotted the meeting on the tenuous grounds that the full financial package required by the meeting's agenda had not been submitted.

Evidently, the talks made more progress without Brittle, Malcolm Phillips and Fran Cotton than they would have done with them. Both Bishop and Brittle say they want to hold another meeting as soon as possible, but for now the chasm within the RFU about how to deal with the recalcitrant clubs has been made fully public. Bishop has in effect usurped Brittle as the union negotiator.

It was Bishop's decision to proceed without Brittle. Should the executive chairman, who last night described the original meeting as having been postponed, seek to be obstructive the president is now likely to go direct to the executive, which is overwhelmingly opposed to Brittle's intransigent stance.

Indeed Bishop, whose appointment to chair the talks was in direct contravention of Brittle's wishes, was so encouraged that he was able to forecast a settlement of the union's differences with the First and Second Division clubs' umbrella body, Epruc, which has already announced a boycott of next season's RFU competitions and will secede unless there is a settlement.

This will still require the clubs' gaining effective control of the competitions in which they participate and the sponsorship and broadcasting money from them, but it seems that they will now be accommodated. "The senior clubs wish to remain within the RFU and to play European and domestic competitions subject to refinement of the [RFU's] competitive structure," Bishop said last night.

"The senior clubs clearly recognise the aspirations of players to play international and representative rugby and wish to facilitate that process. No insurmountable problems are perceived. I trust this statement is greatly reassuring to the game and will allow us to be united in proceeding towards next season."

acceptance and surgery.

"It was like coming home," she said. "When I realised that

Court of Justice found ... behaviour of the school directors breached the 1976 Euro-

that the Government would have to amend legislation.

birth certificates and passports."

missioning IRA weapons

هكذا من الأصل